United Nations A/60/PV.4

General Assembly
Sixtieth session

Official Records

4th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 14 September 2005, 3 p.m.
New York

Co-Chairperson: El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba ..... (President of the Gabonese Republic)
Co-Chairperson: Mr. Göran Persson ..... (Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Sweden)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Addresses on the occasion of the High-level Plenary Meeting (*continued*)

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): May I remind members that, in accordance with resolution 59/291 of 15 April 2005, the list of speakers was established bearing in mind the fact that statements would be limited to five minutes. I would therefore ask speakers to make their statements at a normal pace so that they can be correctly interpreted.

To help speakers to manage their speaking time, a timing mechanism has been set up at the rostrum from which they will speak. I urge all speakers to respect the time limits for their statements so that all who are inscribed on the list for a given meeting can make their statement at that meeting.

In order to avoid interrupting speakers, I would kindly ask representatives to remain in their seats after statements are made. I remind members that, having made their statements, speakers are to leave the General Assembly Hall via room GA-200, which is behind the rostrum, before returning to their seats.

The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda.

President Kagame: We meet this week to mark the passage of 60 eventful years in the life of the United Nations and to reaffirm our belief in its principles. We also meet to renew and breathe fresh life into the Organization, to consider the reforms necessary, and to review the progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of the Millennium Summit, held here five years ago.

Looking back over these years, it is clear that there have been some remarkable successes in fulfilling the United Nations Charter principles, but that there have also been a number of serious failures. Rwanda has experienced both. This is also a great opportunity for us to reflect on our relations and responsibilities as sovereign nations.

It is clearer today than ever before that, in this age of globalization, interdependence is self-evident. By recognizing that interdependence, we accept our collective interests and responsibilities, whether we are developed or developing nations. Those include the imperative for development and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, peace and security, human rights and the rule of law.

There is no greater challenge facing humanity today than poverty and underdevelopment. For sub-Saharan Africa, it is unacceptable that, despite our commitment at the Millennium Summit five years ago, the prediction is that conditions will worsen by 2015.

So, what has gone wrong in the last five years? Was the pledge to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 overambitious, or were the commitments to the Millennium Development

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Goals overestimated? Did we fail to assess the resource gaps and policy reforms that needed to be addressed, or are we to be contented with admirable commitments and international declarations at the expense of tangible actions and results to achieve the Millennium Development Goals? Most importantly, should we go back to the drawing board, five years down the road, because we have suddenly realized that the initial road map was misconceived? I believe that the answer is no.

Whatever the case, it is clear that we must do things radically differently and in an accelerated manner. We must devise and agree to faithfully implement innovative and practicable measures to ensure that we reverse current trends. That will require commitment to implement the Monterrey Consensus on financing for development, including the frontloading of future commitments. Noteworthy are such initiatives as the International Financing Facility.

But for such initiatives and commitments to succeed, there should be clear and practical modalities of implementation. We welcome the proposal to ease supply-side constraints and commodity price shocks in order to take the fullest possible advantage of increased market access.

It has become abundantly clear to us that the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals will be contingent on good political and economic governance. In Rwanda, we are trying to do our bit. We have implemented several political and economic reforms over the last decade, and so far the indication is that we are on the right track. All in all, the progress we have made gives us reason to be optimistic that, with the enhanced support of our development partners, we can attain the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

As we all know, there is a strong relationship between security and development. That nexus between peace, security and development is crystal-clear to us in Rwanda and the wider Great Lakes region of East and Central Africa. Our own experience in Rwanda has shown us that insecurity caused by reckless and irresponsible governance can cause immense suffering, adverse to human development.

Let me also stress the importance of our collective responsibility to deal with terrorism and to protect populations under threat of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Never again should the international community's response to those crimes be found wanting. Let us resolve to take collective action in a timely and decisive manner. Let us also commit ourselves to putting in place early warning mechanisms and to ensuring that preventive interventions are the rule rather than the exception.

If the United Nations is to effectively fulfil its mission, then the following measures must be taken. First, we must improve coherence, efficiency and effectiveness within the United Nations system so as to promote transparency and accountability. Secondly, we believe that the reform process should enable States that are not members of the Security Council to participate more actively in its deliberative and decision-making processes, especially on issues that affect them. A reformed Council should be seen by all States to be more representative, transparent, credible and legitimate.

In conclusion, if we believe in our common humanity and our global partnership, then the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals makes sense, both for business as well as to promote global stability. As we debate, posterity will not judge us kindly if we fail to seize the moment and to reverse the suffering of millions of the world's poor at the height of such unprecedented affluence and technological and scientific advances.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Marc Ravalomanana, President of the Republic of Madagascar.

President Ravalomanana (*spoke in French*): Before speaking of the progress that we have achieved in the context of the eight Millennium Development Goals, I wish to draw members' attention to three important points.

First, five years ago, eight development objectives were defined, representing major progress. Today, we must go further because fighting poverty now requires a sound road map, a clear vision and a global development strategy that, today more than ever, must set minimum standards.

Secondly, the Millennium Development Goals are not isolated objectives. They are interdependent, and coordinated action to achieve them all is therefore crucial.

Thirdly, efforts to benefit the poorest countries must be redoubled or even tripled. They should be dictated by a new vision for Africa and a coordinated plan of action. We need a Marshall Plan for Africa. I proposed such a plan last year. With such a new and decisive approach, the Millennium Goals can be achieved.

Poverty in Madagascar was reduced from 80 per cent in 2002 to 74 per cent in 2004. That represents a major step, but not nearly enough. Many people, especially in the southern regions of our country, still go hungry. Thanks to new schools, new teachers and free basic education, school attendance has risen from 67 per cent to 82 per cent in three years. Infant mortality has dropped from 159 to 94 per thousand children below the age of five. That represents great progress.

As to gender equality and the advancement of women, my Government has launched a national policy for the advancement of women and drafted a national plan of action for gender and development. Maternal health care has improved, with a 20 per cent increase in medically assisted births.

In the campaign against HIV/AIDS, a national committee to combat AIDS is striving, under my direct authority, to stabilize the infection rate, which currently stands at approximately 1.5 per cent. In the fight against malaria, my Government has distributed free treated mosquito nets to pregnant women and children below the age of five. Campaigns to heighten AIDS and malaria awareness continue throughout the country.

Through our project entitled "Madagascar, Naturally", we seek to protect and preserve nature. The extent of protected areas will triple within five years. Many measures have been adopted to prevent brush fires.

Finally, our efforts in the field of good governance and the opening of our economy have been acknowledged by donors, who have cancelled our multilateral debts. The fight against corruption is in full swing.

I should like to speak of these matters in greater detail, but I believe that I have conveyed a sense of the major efforts we have made. We are resolved to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, but I repeat that it is only with a new approach on the part of the international community to benefit Africa that we will be able to achieve them.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

President Ahmadinejad (*spoke in Farsi; English text provided by the delegation*): At the outset, I wish to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General and my pleasure at participating in this gathering of colleagues, heads of State and Government, and representatives. May I also register my deepest grief over the tragic incidents in Kadhimiya, Iraq, and Hurricane Katrina, and also convey my condolences and sympathies to the victims and their loved ones.

The United Nations must be the focal point of reliance, hope and participation for all peoples and Governments, and a forum for dialogue, understanding and cooperation to achieve peace and tranquillity throughout the globe. The attainment of that objective requires, first, that justice reign supreme in the Organization, and that, in accordance with its Charter, all Member States enjoy equal rights. Greater power or wealth should not accord expanded rights to any Member.

Secondly, the principles of democracy and ethics should prevail in all organs and functions of the United Nations, so that the Organization can become a manifestation of the prevalence of those two commonly shared values.

Thirdly, the United Nations should endeavour to fulfil its responsibility to promote and institutionalize justice at the international level.

Fourthly, the host country should not enjoy any right or privilege over the rest of the membership, and the Organization and its Headquarters must be easily accessible to all.

In recognition of those principles, the following points become essential.

First, the greatest challenge of our age is the gradual spiritual debasement of human beings brought about by the distancing of the prevailing order from the morality and unity of monotheism. The United Nations should lead in the promotion of spirituality and compassion for humanity. Only thus can the nations become truly unified.

Secondly, the acceptance of unilateralism represents the absolute negation of the United Nations and its raison d'être. Therefore, the United Nations as a whole should confront that vicious malady.

Thirdly, the physical and psychological security of peoples and nations is today more endangered than ever. Unilateralism, the production and use of weapons of mass destruction, intimidation, the resort to the threat or use of force, and the imposition of destructive wars on peoples for the sake of the security and prosperity of a few Powers have redoubled the historic responsibility of the United Nations to strive resolutely to institutionalize justice in all aspects of global interaction in the interest of human tranquillity. In our view, it is impossible to achieve security, peace, stability, prosperity and progress in certain parts of the world at the cost of fomenting instability, militarism, discrimination, poverty and deprivation in others.

Fourthly the raison d'être of the United Nations is to promote global peace and tranquillity. Therefore, any license for pre-emptive measures — which are essentially based on gauging intentions rather than objective facts, and are in fact a modern manifestation of the interventionist and war-mongering tendencies of the past — is in blatant contradiction to the very foundations of the United Nations and to the letter and spirit of its Charter.

Fifthly, the composition of the Security Council must achieve a logical and democratic balance. If permanent membership is accepted for some, then an acceptable combination of representatives of all continents and major civilizations must acquire permanent seats on the Council. I wish to underline our deep dismay over the fact that not one of the more than 50 Islamic countries, encompassing more than 1.2 billion people, has a permanent seat in the Security Council; nor does Africa, with its huge capabilities and potentials, while the vast continent of Asia with its ancient civilizations has only one permanent seat.

Sixthly, the United Nations must be able freely to welcome representatives from all Governments, civil society and non-governmental organizations from throughout the world to its Headquarters without the selective hindrances of the host country, and to engage without fear in serious dialogue.

In our view, those concerns can be met only if the prevailing discourse in international relations is transformed from one based on violence, discrimination and domination into one of peace and global stability founded on justice and spirituality through dialogue, compassion and respect for human beings. The exalted Prophet of Islam says that "the highest state of wisdom, after faith in God, is seeking friendship with people and extending a helping hand to all fellow human beings". Those words of wisdom underline the fact that the entire globe is but one entity and that the pain and suffering of any part disturbs the tranquillity of all. In the words of a famous Iranian poet of the thirteenth century:

> "All human beings are members of one frame
> Since all, at first, from the same essence came.
> When time afflicts a limb with pain
> The other limbs cannot at rest remain."

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Alejandro Toledo Manrique, President of the Republic of Peru.

President Toledo Manrique (*spoke in Spanish*): I speak on behalf of a democratic country that is deeply convinced that the development of our countries, respect for human rights and free expression, and security are mutually reinforcing. Within the four years of my Government, Peru, with its difficulties and hopes, has moved forward, building sustained economic growth and a fairer society, and ensuring the comprehensive security of its inhabitants.

We have made the Millennium Development Goals a national commitment. They are reflected in State policies that go beyond my own Government. Those policies are reflected in the National Agreement that the political parties, civil society and the Government have pledged to fulfil in 20 years. In other words, our commitment to the Millennium Development Goals will not end with my Government.

Some advances in the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals are evident today. Since 2001, the economic and social policies of my Government have created the conditions for sustained and decentralized growth, with positive results reflected in increased rates of consumption and income. I have managed the country for 48 months of sustained economic growth at a rate of 5 to 5.5 per cent.

The Government of Peru is implementing specific policies in such areas such as employment, income,

health, education, nutrition and gender issues with a view to helping the poorest. The central efforts of my Government are aimed at decisively addressing poverty. It has established purposive social policies, without consideration of their potential economic benefits, such as the Huascaran plan aimed at internet connectivity for the poorest; policies to improve short-term employment for the poorest, such as the "A Trabajar Urbano" programme; subsidized housing programmes for the poorest; and policies for rural electrification and basic health care to provide Peru's poorest with water and sewer systems. Moreover, although we do not believe in handouts, a programme of direct and conditioned subsidy for the poorest was launched a few days ago. As a reciprocal condition, that direct subsidy to the poorest requires pregnant mothers to have prenatal and postnatal check-ups and to get their children vaccinated and send them to school.

As a result of those efforts, between 2001 and 2004 approximately 1 million Peruvian men and women have been lifted out of extreme poverty. In that regard, in the latest United Nations *Human Development Report*, Peru has risen six places in the ranking of 177 countries.

The time has come to speak clearly. The sustainable development of our peoples requires an open international trade system based on standard rules. President Bush's statement to the General Assembly this morning was encouraging. He said that the developed countries must eliminate their subsidies. He said that, in order to be sustainable, globalization must meet the needs of the developing countries. President Bush's statement this morning was encouraging because it reflected a meeting of the minds between the developing and the developed countries.

Peru is committed to fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals not as part of the policy of one particular Government, but as a State policy. I know that all the leaders here in this Hall share that mission.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Tommy Remengesau, Jr., President of the Republic of Palau.

President Remengesau: May I first congratulate the United Nations on its diamond anniversary, and may I express my country's full support for this international body in its efforts to build nations, to curb hunger, to ensure water, to aspire to economic and cultural equality, and to bring nations together to solve global issues. Truly, the work plan is a difficult one, yet it is one from which the Organization must not deviate.

I would also like to convey to all present my pride regarding the tenth anniversary of my country's independence. As such, this year also marks the tenth anniversary of our membership in the United Nations. The Republic of Palau, although small and new in terms of political independence, has survived and, I might add, prospered in its first 10 years of self-rule. Yet much of our future depends on the global efforts made by the United Nations to bring peace, stability and economic sustainability to all of its Member nations.

The Secretary-General, in his report "In larger freedom", states that,

> "[O]ne of the great challenges of the new millennium is to ensure that all States are strong enough to meet the many challenges they face ... [N]o country, weak or strong, can realize prosperity in a vacuum." (*A/59/2005*, paras. 19 and 24)

For Palau, and for many other small island developing States, the challenges are mounting. We are new countries, remote and isolated. We are small countries, with small economies that lack fiscal diversity. We are island nations whose sustainable development requires healthy reefs, plentiful oceans, freedom from incursions by international terrorists, and meaningful educational and career opportunities for our children, who are leaving our islands in pursuit of both.

While other regions of the world receive more attention, Professor Jeffrey Sachs, in his Millennium Project Report to the Secretary-General, noted that Oceania is second only to sub-Saharan Africa in being "off track for nearly every [Millennium] Goal, and falling back in some areas". While Palau is proud of its performance in moving towards the achievement of those Goals, that is clearly not the case in all of our island nations, and we must move aggressively forward in bringing equality of opportunity to all of nations in achieving the Goals through the actions of the United Nations.

As global warming worsens, bleaching our corals and threatening our land; as overfishing by foreign fishing fleets continues to deplete our vast fish stocks; as certain fishing practices threaten to destroy our marine biodiversity; and as the combination of those forces places our diverse island cultures in jeopardy, the challenges mount.

It is therefore time for the international community, and the United Nations as its representative, to begin to move beyond studies that recognize past failures to achieve sustainable development in our island nations, and to move aggressively forward and to establish a specific programme agenda that recognizes our unique smallness, that appreciates our distinctive diversity, and that respects our island cultures as equal to those of other nations of this world. And, I might add, it is time to bring the moral and religious leadership into the process of defining a new direction, not only for our small islands, but for all of the countries of the world. International peace and security could well be strengthened by such a partnership.

In our effort to develop a workable outcome from our high-level event and to speed our international development efforts, we must first recognize that this process is one of partnership. As partners, it is important to acknowledge that significant achievements have indeed been made since the Millennium Summit and Monterrey Conference. To continue that joint forward movement, we must all recognize realistic needs and responsibilities. While developed countries must continue to work to expand their annual contributions and to improve disbursements, developing countries must establish environments that maximize the effectiveness of those contributions. Good governance must be treated as a mechanism not only for expanding development assistance, but for improving the lives of our people as well. And it is not unreasonable to anticipate that strong recipient performance will lead to greater donor contributions.

Due to recent international events, it is also time for the United Nations to immediately expand its emergency response to the rising prices of fuel. For small island developing States, economic gains made over the past 10 years are being wiped away by spiralling fuel prices. For island economies to survive, we must move rapidly and decisively towards alternate energy resources, which can be accomplished only through international assistance and funding. With great sincerity, we take this opportunity to acknowledge the efforts of the United Nations and of those countries and international institutions that have recognized our situation and worked with us to overcome our unique challenges.

The United States has laboured for over 50 years to help us instil principles of democracy in our leadership and in our children and has nurtured our young institutions. We offer our sincere thanks. With our American friends, we also mourn the tragedy of Hurricane Katrina's aftermath. We have no doubt, however, that, given the resilience of the American character, America and those impacted will rebound from that great tragedy.

We acknowledge the continual support of Japan to our region and to our country, and we are hopeful that the Security Council expansion and reform process will result in Japan's permanent membership of the Security Council, where it can employ its knowledge of our region in the deliberations of that body. Fair and equal representation of the nations of this world in its international body, the United Nations, can only strengthen our efforts to achieve a powerful and respected voice on international and regional issues.

As Palau supports Japan's wider role, due to its importance to the region, it also supports Taiwan's membership in this body as a significant regional friend to Palau and an important member of the world community. As long as one nation and one people are excluded from their rightful representation in our global community, we have failed to achieve our goal of universal rights and privileges.

We also take this opportunity to commend the Government of Israel and Prime Minister Sharon on the historical disengagement from Gaza and parts of the West Bank. We have followed that complex and painful process and look forward to further progress on achieving peace.

In spite of Palau's increasing support for the United Nations work around the world, and despite our determination to become an active member of the multilateral community, I note that the United Nations, its organizations and offices do not have one permanent representative in our nation to assist us in developing our capacity. Surely, the intimate knowledge gained of our unique culture, economy and people is well worth the expense of providing such

representation. To that end, along with several other Pacific countries, we have asked the Secretary-General to help us by establishing United Nations representation in Palau to assist our people in accessing the international institutions, which will be helpful in our drive for economic and social independence. We consider that to be a vital foundation for our sustainable development.

The people of Palau recognize that every nation in the world, regardless of its size, has an important role to play on the international stage in assuring the global community of a bright and secure future for its children. Today, on the sixtieth anniversary of this great institution, the tenth anniversary of Palau's membership in this body, and the tenth anniversary of Palau's independence, I affirm that the people of Palau, despite all obstacles and challenges, will play their part.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal.

President Wade (*spoke in French*): I cannot forego this opportunity to commend our Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his outstanding work, and in particular for his recent proposed reform of the United Nations, now celebrating its sixtieth anniversary. Reforming a 60-year old institution and its many parts is no easy task, and we must therefore bear in mind that such widespread reform will not be possible again for decades to come.

My statement will bear on the following points: a few considerations on the Millennium Development Goals and on how we have sought to implement them in our country; financing for development and combating poverty; and Security Council reform.

As to the Millennium Development Goals, our assessment has revealed the many obstacles still hindering their achievement. Some are to be found within our countries — the lack of peace, poor governance, the AIDS pandemic and other diseases. Let us agree, however, that the developed countries have not always complied with their commitments, especially regarding the 1970s pledge to provide development assistance to the developing countries at the level of 0.7 per cent of their gross national product, as well as the financing of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

Fortunately, the new approach set out in the Blair report opened promising prospects arising from the Gleneagles Summit of the Group of Eight. Despite everything, our countries, including my own, with their very meagre resources but a good deal of imagination and diversified international assistance, have achieved honourable results. In Senegal, we have achieved a growth rate of 6.7 per cent, with spectacular results in agriculture, where production in some areas has increased by 600 per cent. Many jobs have been created for young people. Thanks to our allocation of 40 per cent of the national budget to education and 10 per cent to health care, the AIDS prevalence rate has fallen from 1.7 to 0.7 per cent, and school attendance is now at 70 per cent, whereas we were below average in 2000. Our development has also been sustained by consistent investment in human resources.

History shows that science and technology are irreplaceable vectors of progress. Thus, in considering the digital gap, we note that telephone, facsimile, telex and Internet communications are most developed in the North — in what I call the connected countries — whereas the South is sorely lacking in that regard. Those technologies underpin knowledge, so that science is developed and transmitted mostly in the North, to the detriment of the South. That is why, in December 2002 in Geneva, we proposed the creation of the Global Digital Solidarity Fund. Although there was some initial misunderstanding, the Fund was adopted by 193 countries. I would request that it be additionally supported, and note that it is functioning on voluntary and not mandatory contributions. It is headquartered in Geneva and managed by the United Cities and Local Governments association, and certain States have already made average contributions of some $300,000 each. It is with pleasure that we have learned that the Dominican Republic has decided to convene a meeting on the Fund here in New York.

I wish to draw Members' attention to the new concept of youth leadership, aimed at developing innovation and leadership in young people. Following the Pan-African African Youth Leadership Summit, organized in Dakar in 2004, a fifth conference was convened in Morocco. We offer our encouragement for the world conference to be held here in New York, and we insist on the fact that we must develop a sense of creativity among young people.

Regarding financing for development, I support the proposal made by President Jacques Chirac that a

small tax be added to the cost of air travel. Such a fee would be minimally painful, so to speak. I also note that, on behalf of the African Union, I have proposed certain new means of financing NEPAD, including the use of treasury notes from the developed countries to assist the countries of the South at no additional cost.

I conclude by referring to Security Council reform. We must identify two sources of the problem. First is the historical injustice done to Africa, not one of whose 53 Member States has a permanent seat on the Security Council, whereas 70 per cent of the items on the Council's agenda pertain to Africa. There has been no one to speak on Africa's behalf since the Security Council was established. I believe that that historical injustice must be redressed by allocating a permanent seat, along with the right of veto, to Africa. As others have said, a more in-depth discussion of the other reforms could be deferred to October or later, but I repeat that a distinction must be drawn between the two issues and that Africa must be provided a seat with the right of veto.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. John Agyekum Kufuor, President of the Republic of Ghana.

President Kufuor: I wish to join previous speakers in congratulating the United Nations on its sixtieth anniversary. I salute Secretary-General Kofi Annan and his team, under whose auspices we are marking this happy occasion.

The United Nations achievements over the past 60 years are phenomenal and span several areas of human endeavour. For example, the Millennium Development Goals, which were unanimously endorsed here to launch the current century, raised expectations further for the betterment of mankind. However, after five years, and in spite of the emphasis put on the special needs of Africa, very little has been achieved for our continent so far. Africa therefore welcomes the recommendations put forward by the United Nations Millennium Project for realistic programmes towards the achievement of the Goals.

It is in that new spirit that Ghana commends and welcomes the recent cancellation by the G-8 of the debt of some countries of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative. It is hoped that this concession will soon be extended to all African countries. Again, accelerated efforts at achieving the objectives of the Doha Round should, in the long run, help to minimize the dependence of developing countries on aid and thereby abate their economic marginalization.

It must be admitted, however, that the full integration of the economies of the developing world into the global economy would demand in the transition that its enterprises and companies be assisted in becoming more competitive and efficient. It is in recognition of that important fact that Ghana welcomes warmly and commends to the international community the excellent initiative of the United States Government in establishing the Millennium Challenge Account. Other proposals, such as the creation of an international finance facility and substantial additional resources to assist the developing world, especially Africa, during the transitional process must also be supported.

Terrorism has emerged as one of the most serious threats to peace and security in today's world. It is a loose cannon that cannot be justified as a solution to any perceived wrong. The fight against it calls for a sustained, firm and strong collective response from the international community. Consequently, we urge that this occasion be used to reaffirm our commitment to multilateralism, which underpins the spirit and letter of the United Nations Charter.

Similarly, the international community must collectively banish the scourge of war by addressing the issues of disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the menace of illicit small arms and light weapons. In some societies, especially in Africa, the latter constitute the weapons of mass destruction. It needs to be stressed that, over the past decade alone, the use of such weapons has claimed more than 20 million victims in Africa, many of whom have been women and children.

Through its peacekeeping operations around the world, the United Nations has brought relief and hope to victims in conflict areas. We therefore welcome the proposed establishment of a peacebuilding commission to help conflict-afflicted countries in the transition from war to peace and national reconstruction. We also fully support the decision to establish a democracy fund to promote democratic practice and good governance as the surest guarantor of human rights. Likewise, we support the proposal to convert the Human Rights Commission into a human rights council.

As we look to the United Nations to lead the way in meeting our collective aspirations in the rapidly changing world, the Organization must enhance its continued functionality through flexibility. It must therefore undergo substantial reforms in order to be able to discharge its mandate effectively in the light of the complexities of the times. That is why Ghana supports the Secretary-General's document entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all", which advocates the strengthening of the United Nations institutions. Hence, the General Assembly needs to be revitalized in order to enable it to assume fully its rightful place as the most representative and deliberative organ of the United Nations. Also, the need for a more vibrant Economic and Social Council, an efficient Secretariat and adequate funding cannot be overemphasized for a stronger United Nations.

Above all, the Security Council must be restructured and expanded to reflect the increased membership of the United Nations and also to enable it carry out its Charter obligations more purposively with the full confidence of Member States. That reform must be based on the principles of democracy, accountability, the sovereign equality of States and equitable geographical representation, among others. The African Union's claim of two permanent seats on the Council must therefore be supported.

In conclusion, history stands ready to judge us on the outcome of this Meeting. We cannot and should not fail succeeding generations. We therefore welcome the outcome document submitted for our consideration and will support a mechanism for its implementation.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency The Honourable Mr. Mwai Kibaki, President of the Republic of Kenya.

President Kibaki: It is my pleasure to address this gathering of leaders of the United Nations. This summit gives us an opportunity to review progress and reaffirm our commitment to the Millennium Development Goals.

It will be recalled that, in September 2000, world leaders committed themselves to reducing poverty and improving people's lives. Five years later, the world is still faced with the challenges of poverty, hunger, disease and illiteracy. The achievement of the Millennium Development Goals has been uneven across regions and there are wide disparities in the realization of specific Goals.

On the other hand, many countries have made significant progress in creating an enabling environment for attaining the Millennium Development Goals. For instance, most countries in Africa today have positive and growing economic growth rates. Good governance is increasingly taking root. African leaders are working together to improve the lives of their citizens. Regrettably, those efforts are being hampered by limited access to the markets of developed countries, low disbursements of development assistance and the debt burden.

In Kenya, we have made significant progress in a number of areas. In 2004, the economy grew by 4.3 per cent, up from 2.8 per cent the previous year. Primary school enrolment in Kenya has also increased tremendously due to the implementation of free primary education programmes in the last two years. Gross enrolment in primary schools now averages 99 per cent. In total, the Government allocates over 28 per cent of its resources to education.

However, the challenges that have emerged as a result of the programme are enormous. Those include overstretched physical facilities, a high pupil-to-teacher ratio, overcrowding in schools, and the high cost of equipment for children with special needs.

Although the threat of HIV/AIDS remains real, we have made tremendous progress in controlling the spread of HIV. For instance, in Kenya we succeeded in reducing the prevalence of the HIV/AIDS infection from a high of 18 per cent in 2000 to less than 7 per cent in 2004. That success is largely attributed to the policy and institutional arrangements that Kenya has put in place, together with strong support from our development partners.

In spite of the commendable drop in the infection rate, Kenya's health sector continues to face serious challenges from malaria and other communicable diseases. That calls for increased spending in the sector to address those challenges. Accordingly, Kenya has increased spending in the health sector from 8.6 per cent of Government expenditure in the financial year 2004-2005 to 9.9 per cent in 2005-2006.

My Government recognizes the critical role of environmental issues in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. In that respect, we

have taken steps to ensure the sustainable management of the environment. Some of the specific measures we have taken include proper management of forest resources, the sustainable use and management of natural resources and, above all, ensuring that there is an adequate legal and institutional framework. Furthermore, my Government is according priority to the rehabilitation and expansion of infrastructure, such as roads, energy, housing, water and telecommunications. That is in recognition of the high potential of those sectors to accelerate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

As I have already observed, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals continues to be determined by challenges posed by the debt burden and low disbursements of donor aid. Kenya continues to struggle with its huge debt burden, with about 30 per cent of all our revenues from the export of goods and services going to service the external debt. We believe that the country can be set on a sustained growth path through increased development assistance, as well as debt relief, to supplement our efforts. Indeed, we have just concluded a comprehensive assessment of the full range of interventions and resources required to meet the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. The results indicate that the financial requirements are way beyond what we can afford as a country.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate that the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals is the collective responsibility of the world community. I therefore call upon the international community to render its full support and ensure that the commitments made in 2000 are met.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Ivan Gašparović, President of the Slovak Republic.

President Gašparović (*spoke in Slovakian; English text provided by the delegation*): Sixty years is an important anniversary for a person or an organization. It is usually a time for celebration. For the United Nations, it is more a time for contemplation and introspection.

A look at today's world often shows us a very contradictory picture. On the one hand, we are flying into outer space, and on the other entire nations are dying of hunger. We have mapped the human genome, while there are places on Earth where people are dying because of shortages of basic medicines and health care. Human rights have been declared for 60 years and are a part of a universally endorsed document adopted right here at the United Nations, and yet there are still States that deny their citizens' most basic rights while claiming that human rights standards vary from country to country. We have copious knowledge, which enables us to split the atom, but we do not have enough rationality to prevent the misuse of nuclear fission for the manufacture of nuclear weapons. We are capable of building skyscrapers hundreds of meters high, while elsewhere we are tearing down the tin shacks of the poorest among us.

As if we did not have enough problems, there are people who are willing to sacrifice not only their own lives, but also the lives of others — usually innocent civilians — in pursuit of their goals. But terrorist attacks have not changed one essential thing — they have not changed our values. There has been one change, however. We have changed our perception of international security.

It is apparent that the satisfaction of the most elementary human needs cannot be taken for granted in a large part of the planet. On the contrary, even at the beginning of the twenty-first century, it is necessary to fight for them. Millions of people are living in hardship. Additional millions do not have guarantees of basic human rights and essentially all live in fear as a result of global terrorism. In brief, the right to a dignified life remains only a right and not an everyday reality.

The world is at a crossroads and the most important global Organization also stands at that crossroads. Much hangs in the balance, and maintaining the status quo will solve nothing. To say it more openly, maintaining the status quo could lead to the United Nations losing its relevance altogether. In all probability, if the United Nations cannot be reformed, its Member States will look for other ways to promote their interests. The United Nations cannot remain just some sort of a debate club that fails to provide working solutions. The United Nations and its institutions can regain their prestige and accountability only when they prove themselves able to adopt operational decisions for the solving of today's imminent problems.

Let me cite just one specific example. Given the fact that the list of terrorist attacks is growing day by

day, it is difficult to explain to our citizens why the global strategy in the fight against terrorism has been sitting on our desks for six months. That is true, too, for the comprehensive convention on terrorism. Further hesitation and endless negotiations on that issue only enable terrorists to pretend that their inhuman fight is legitimate. I will not be saying anything new when I assert that a resolute, operational and coordinated approach by the international community is necessary in this situation and that the United Nations central role in it is irreplaceable.

On this occasion, I cannot fail to mention that we followed with concern the course of discussions on United Nations reform, which briefly threatened to develop into a deep crisis. We also noted with concern the problems in drafting the outcome document. If multilateralism is to be truly effective, it cannot be based on a search for the least common denominator. On the contrary, it must be driven by the world's current needs. We must avoid one long-standing myth and stop equating multilateralism with absolute consensus. Narrow, individual interests cannot hinder the efforts of a large majority of countries. Processes that move the Organization forward cannot be slowed by the pretext of consensus. If the opposite were true, there would be no search for consensus, but an adjustment to the particular interests of a small minority of countries.

Slovakia does not consider inaction to be an answer. For that reason, together with the European Union, we firmly support efforts for reform that would adapt the United Nations to new conditions. For Slovakia, the idea of effective multilateralism is not just a trendy buzzword in international relations, but a true guarantee of security, equality and justice.

Although it does not fully reflect our ideas and ambitions on the depth and forcefulness of measures needed to reform the United Nations system, the draft outcome document is, in our opinion, a basic starting point for a more effective multilateralism whose central role is to be played by the United Nations. At the same time, it is necessary to remain sober-minded in its assessment. The draft outcome document is not a solution to today's situation, but only a guide to its resolution. The draft outcome document is first and foremost a framework for further steps. For the latter, we will need much political will and many compromises. The sixtieth session of the General Assembly will be as important to the success of a reform package as today's summit. On the other hand, a number of ambitious proposals had to give way to compromise, but that does not mean that they should be stricken or forgotten.

Further steps will undoubtedly be necessary to make the United Nations Secretariat more effective and better managed, achieve more effective operation and avoid duplication or a lack of coordination in the work of individual institutions and organizations of the United Nations system.

The completion and strengthening of the human rights dimension and a renewal of the dynamics of negotiations and measures in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation continue to be challenges. We are convinced that in the upcoming period the international community will find enough political will and determination to solve these issues, in the interest of strengthening the role and authority of the United Nations in the system of global relations.

In conclusion, I would like to call your attention to the success story of the transformation of Slovakia from a former recipient of assistance into a donor country. This demonstrates that it is indeed possible to overcome serious economic problems and to stabilize social growth and development. It does, however, require more than just international aid or debt relief. The creation of a safe and stable legal, political and corporate environment must be the absolute priority. We are pleased to see that the report by the Secretary-General, "In larger freedom", and the resulting summit decisions, as articulated in the outcome document, emphasize exactly what Slovakia has learned from its own experience, namely, that development is not possible without guarantees for the security of the country, without respect for human rights and the rule of law and without good governance and the effective management of one's own affairs.

I would like to take this opportunity to assure you that Slovakia stands ready to share its experience and best practices in the implementation of its domestic reforms and also, in this way, to contribute to the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Rakhmonov, President of the Republic of Tajikistan.

President Rakhmonov (*spoke in Russian*): Five years ago, in this Hall, the heads of State and Government of the Member States of the United Nations reaffirmed their commitment to the values of peace, freedom and equality, and undertook to eliminate poverty and ensure development throughout the world. This determination has been enshrined in the Millennium Declaration. Since that time, a great deal has been done to achieve the Development Goals, but it is clear that this is not enough. More than a billion inhabitants of our world live in extreme poverty, tens of thousands of children are dying every day from hunger and disease and we see an increase in environmental and other problems.

Among the most serious global challenges and threats are terrorism, drug trafficking and the modern-day slave trade. We need to develop joint efforts to extirpate those shameful phenomena. It is especially important that we work together to find an answer to the question why there has been an upsurge in terrorist violence in the world, avoiding excessive simplifications and generalizations in attaching any type of ideological or religious labels. In this connection, it is dangerous to talk about so-called Islamic terrorism. This is designed to discredit and stigmatize Islam and the Islamic world, and it has nothing to do with the dialogue of civilizations. In the political and legal assessment of terrorist activities, there should not be dual standards, depending on one's standpoint, just as there is no such thing as moderate or immoderate terrorists. The international community should hold to single criteria and standards in combating all forms and manifestations of terrorism.

Combating the production and spread of drugs, which is a breeding ground for terrorism and international criminal activity and a serious barrier to sustainable development, should be also a global task, just like the fight against terrorism. In this context, there is an increasing need to establish, under the aegis of the United Nations, an effective global anti-drug partnership.

The international community is facing the need to give powerful momentum to social and economic progress and to the achievement of the Millennium Goals by all countries. A key here is the principle of shared responsibility of countries on the basis of the Monterrey Consensus, as was reaffirmed in the Johannesburg Plan of Action. Tajikistan offers a clear and positive reaffirmation of the link between security and development. With the assistance of the United Nations, we were the first in the world to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the needs of our country in order to achieve the Millennium Goals. At the same time, Tajikistan is among those countries whose social and economic development at this stage depends on assistance from abroad. We hope that the international donor community will, as a very minimum, double the assistance it is giving today.

The burden of external indebtedness is one of the most serious obstacles to progress. In the case of Tajikistan, it would be effective to include an innovative mechanism for solving the debt problem, such as, for example, the offering of credits under the "Debt Cancellation for Sustainable Development" formula. The donor countries, including the members of the G-8, can be assured that the resources released will be used to combat poverty and to solve a whole series of problems impeding the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

In the context of development, it is difficult to overestimate the significance of regional cooperation, especially in Central Asia. Tajikistan has consistently advocated the intensification and the consolidation of regional integration, including through such machinery as the Central Asian Cooperation Organization, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Eurasian Cooperation Organization.

The countries of our region are profoundly interested in the positive development of complex processes which are taking place in Afghanistan and in the economic development of Afghanistan and its Central Asian neighbours, bearing in mind that the regional context of the post-conflict recovery of that country is a guarantee for the success of the efforts underway there to restore peace and stability. We are convinced that multifaceted regional cooperation must fully encompass Afghanistan within the framework of the concept of a greater Central Asia, through the adoption of a common vision.

One of the most important sources of wealth in our world, which is not only a basis for environmental balance but also the most important basis for economic well-being, is water resources. The commemoration in 2003 of the International Year of Fresh Water was a benchmark in the establishment of an international water agenda. We are grateful to all those countries which have supported this initiative on the part of

Tajikistan. Bearing in mind the serious nature of the problem of water for the countries of Central Asia, I propose that, under the aegis of the United Nations, we establish an international mechanism to coordinate efforts, with a view to alleviating the consequences of the destruction of the Aral Sea, whereby we can give priority to the regional pilot project to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

As is well known, 22 March 2005 marked the beginning of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", 2005-2015, which also was proposed by Tajikistan. As one of the steps towards achieving the Millennium Goals, I propose that in 2010 we hold an international forum in Dushanbe on drinking water, so that together we can evaluate the practical implementation of a coordinated international drinking water agenda.

Tajikistan has consistently advocated the further enhancement of the role of the United Nations as a central international forum designed to find a common overall approach to problems of development in all countries and to do this while paying attention to the specific conditions of each country. We must do our utmost to ensure that the current summit meeting will go down in history as a breakthrough in the development of international cooperation for peace and development and as an example of goals achieved. We rely on a renewed, strong United Nations for support and assistance in this endeavour.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will now hear an address by His Majesty Don Juan Carlos I, King of the Kingdom of Spain.

King Juan Carlos I (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to convey my congratulations to the Co-Chairpersons of this High-level Plenary Meeting, Their Excellencies the President of Gabon and the Prime Minister of Sweden, who, I am sure, will lead our deliberations very ably.

I would also like to express my appreciation to the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, Mr. Jean Ping, for his effective leadership during the preparations for this Plenary Meeting. I have no doubt that his successor, Ambassador Jan Eliasson, will implement our decisions successfully.

Above all, however, we owe the holding of this meeting to Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who two years ago expressed his belief that the United Nations was at a critical juncture and initiated steps to see it through this phase.

Before proceeding with my statement, I would like to reiterate, on my own account, and on behalf of the Government and the people of Spain, my most sincere condolences and solidarity to the authorities and to the people of the United States of America, as host country of our Organization, with respect to the tragic aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, which has claimed so many victims and caused so much destruction.

I would like to start by pointing out that we should strengthen multilateralism, turning it into a useful tool for building an international order based on three interdependent, indivisible and fundamental pillars: peace and security, respect for human rights and sustainable development.

Our societies are every day more conscious of the complex horizons offered by our present world. We cannot disappoint them. The commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the Organization affords the ideal opportunity for us to agree on an ambitious programme of reforms aimed at reinvigorating and strengthening the multilateral mechanisms and institutions of the United Nations system. The United Nations is today, without doubt, the most powerful and inclusive multilateral instrument available to international society.

This Plenary Meeting has an ambitious agenda. It must evaluate compliance with the Millennium Goals. There is no more urgent or crucial task for the international community today. I believe that all of us have come here with the clear conviction that we are still far from reaching our objectives, and that we cannot fail to meet the expectations that have been created.

The new and complex realities emerging at the beginning of the twenty-first century highlight the world's dramatic struggle between progress and inequality, without having tools good enough to allow progress to benefit everyone equally. The reports and information that are available about the huge needs, inequalities, injustices and suffering still endured by millions of human beings are devastating. This breaks our hearts, especially where it affects children and the most vulnerable.

Spain has experienced sustained economic development, and thus understands solidarity as a rising social and personal value. For that reason, we would not be faithful to our principles if we were not ready to translate our prosperity into cooperation and commitment to others. I am, therefore, pleased to reiterate Spain's firm determination to increase our commitment to the eradication of hunger and poverty and to the development of the world's most disadvantaged countries, devoting particular attention to the needs of Africa, without forgetting medium-income nations, especially those in Latin America.

Spain is firmly committed to peacekeeping efforts; these should be strengthened. A good illustration of our commitment is the unselfish contribution of our armed and security forces in several parts of the world, including Haiti, the Balkans and Afghanistan. I pay special tribute to all those involved in peacekeeping and international cooperation missions who dedicate themselves to their work, up to the ultimate sacrifice of their lives. They are a poignant example of dedication to others. I am thinking in particular of our soldiers who died recently in Afghanistan in the performance of the mission entrusted to them under the mandate of the Security Council to support the current process of reconstruction and political transition.

No State can hope today to resolve on its own the common challenges and threats to the coexistence and well-being of our peoples. Terrorism, always cruel, unjustifiable and inhuman; the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; the illegal arms trade; and the serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law: these all require a decisive and collective response, based on solidarity, and should be duly reflected in the decisions we adopt.

I would like to express before this Assembly Spain's full support for the global counter-terrorism strategy of the United Nations, outlined by the Secretary-General in Madrid on 10 March of this year, and to recall that one of its main components is assistance and support for all victims and their families.

The reform of United Nations bodies is necessary to adapt the Organization to its new challenges.

The promotion and protection of human rights is central to Spain's foreign policy priorities. We therefore support the creation of a Human Rights Council that would assume more effectively the mandate of the Commission on Human Rights, incorporating existing protection mechanisms into its activities and improving those mechanisms.

Revitalizing the General Assembly in order to focus its attention on the priority issues of our time; reforming the Security Council, based on the broadest possible agreement, to make it more effective, more democratic, more representative and truly capable of ensuring compliance with its decisions; strengthening the role of the Economic and Social Council in an interdependent and globalized world; creating a Peacebuilding Commission that can at last fill the void that has existed until now in post-conflict situations; and, lastly, strengthening the Secretariat and improving the management of the Organization: all these are objectives that Spain shares. We hope to contribute actively to achieving them.

Before concluding, I wish to say that the Spanish Government welcomes the Secretary-General's endorsement last July of a Spanish initiative, co-sponsored by Turkey, by establishing a high-level group that will present a report by the end of 2006 for a plan of action for a proposed alliance of civilizations.

In a year that marks the fiftieth anniversary of Spain's membership in the United Nations, may I reiterate my country's faithful and firm commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter, to effective multilateralism and to a renewed United Nations.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Fradique Bandeira Melo de Menezes, President of the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe.

President De Menezes (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): At this time, as we commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations, we are unanimous in recognizing that international society has undergone many varied changes that make it very different from the one that existed in the far-off year of 1945. That makes the need for an adaptation and revitalization of this Organization more than evident.

It is never too much to emphasize the new challenges and threats that mankind is confronted with, specifically infectious diseases, the degradation of the environment, natural disasters, international organized crime, corruption, the proliferation of all types of

weapons, terrorism, constant violations of human rights and others.

Today we must all recognize that, despite the significant changes in the international political scene, we continue to live under permanent and persistent evidence of new threats, against which we must adopt a more vigorous and interventionist position to prevent excesses that could jeopardize the survival of mankind and of nature itself. Eradicating hunger and extreme poverty, ensuring universal primary education, fostering gender equality, guaranteeing environmental sustainability, developing global partnerships, reducing infant mortality, improving the health of mothers and babies, fighting HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases and malaria: all these are matters that require collective work and, therefore, constitute a tremendous challenge for all of us.

In terms of the Millennium Goals, we are all aware of them. We know they are ambitious, but they constitute an attainable goal if there is political will on the part of the Member States coupled with making the required financial resources available. Therefore, words and promises must be transformed into concrete actions.

Aware of our responsibilities and of the need to create conditions and an environment favourable for meeting the Millennium Goals, São Tomé and Príncipe has adopted a strategic plan to reduce poverty. Many principal development partners have participated in its implementation, and from them we request continued support, without which our economic indicators will continue to deteriorate.

In connection with the Millennium Goals, may I make some comments on the report of the Commission for Africa, an initiative of the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Mr. Tony Blair. This initiative, including the recommendations for African Governments, is welcome, and I hope that all members of the G-8 will endorse them and work toward their implementation.

If we analyse the different conflict situations, particularly in Africa, whose resolution was possible only thanks to the intervention of the United Nations, we are forced to note that in several cases the political solution to the conflict was not sufficiently followed up, leaving serious social and economic situations unresolved, with often very dramatic effects on the population.

São Tomé and Príncipe supports the idea of establishing a Commission for Peace whose function would be to help in conflict prevention. Likewise, we support the idea of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts and to keep the peace. In the case of Africa this reinforced cooperation with the specialized bodies of the African Union will specifically allow for the training of resources in this area.

The desired reform of our Organization must not neglect the need to confer upon the United Nations its true universal nature, such that all nations of the world are represented in it — a fact that has not yet occurred with respect to the 23 million inhabitants of Taiwan.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Ms. Tarja Halonen, President of the Republic of Finland.

President Halonen: My congratulations to the Co-Chairpersons. I would like to thank cordially all those who have contributed to the preparation of this summit, in particular Mr. Jean Ping and Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

Security, development and human rights go hand in hand, and they are key factors in arriving at a more just world. Today more than ever before, the opportunities for doing good are enormous. We have the capacity, and we have the knowledge and resources. We lack only delivery.

We all are part of the same global community. With effective cooperation, we can reform globalization and make it an effective tool for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Eliminating poverty and inequality and promoting sustainable development of the economy and the environment are our common goals. We have to improve the status and rights of women and respect the rights of children.

The international community has begun to understand the importance of the social dimension of globalization. Employment has to be made a global goal. Access to decent work and an education for all are the key to lifting individuals and nations from poverty to prosperity.

The second conference of the Helsinki Process on Globalisation and Democracy, held last week, sent a message to this summit. Dialogue between

governments, business and non-governmental organizations will help promote fair globalization. More space for multi-stakeholder dialogue is also needed in the United Nations.

The goals of the United Nations Charter are still valid. To fulfil them in the globalized world we need effective multilateralism, institutional reforms and adequate resources for development. For that, we need to improve the quantity, quality and effectiveness of aid, as well as policy coherence. In addition, we must see that HIV/AIDS is a social challenge calling for a multisectoral response. Ensuring reproductive health and rights is crucial in all aspects of development.

I am happy with the outcome document, which provides a basis for further work during the coming months. Still, I would have liked to see our firm commitment to fight terrorism accompanied by progress in disarmament and non-proliferation as well.

Finland is in favour of a comprehensive reform of the United Nations. The General Assembly must regain its authority. We have to find a solution in this General Assembly session to Security Council reform. The Council has to be expanded with both new permanent and new non-permanent members. We need to continue with the proper reform of the economic and social sector of the United Nations.

Finland welcomes the decision to set up a Peacebuilding Commission. Its work should start by the given deadline. Moreover, it is particularly important to strengthen the status of human rights issues within the United Nations. Our decision to set up a Human Rights Council is excellent, but all the modalities need to be resolved as a matter of urgency. For real progress, we must ensure that enough women participate in the work of these new bodies.

We have committed ourselves to challenging goals, in particular to reducing extreme poverty by half by the year 2015. So far, our efforts have not been sufficient. We all now share the responsibility for making the common goals come true.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Vaira Vike-Freiberga, President of the Republic of Latvia.

President Vike-Freiberga: As we gather to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations, we recognize that it needs fundamental and far-reaching reforms to remain viable as an organization and to be capable of meeting the modern-day challenges of the twenty-first century.

Freedom from want, freedom from fear and freedom to live in dignity must be the leading goals of our Organization so that we can meet the rightful expectations of our peoples across the globe.

As one of the Secretary-General's five special envoys, I have heard many expressions of support for the Secretary-General's proposals contained in his report "In larger freedom", an important and historical document for the United Nations. Yet reaching a consensus has proved to be a very difficult task indeed, as many of us have approached these proposals from quite radically different viewpoints.

The President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, Mr. Jean Ping, deserves our highest praise for showing leadership and crafting an outcome document that reflects our concerns and aspirations in a fair and delicately balanced way. Adoption of this document will provide us with a framework for action. The stakes are higher than they have ever been. We must display the political will and the courage to forge ahead with implementation of our decisions. We have reaffirmed our commitment to achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals of reducing poverty and disease, promoting children's education and gender equality, fostering sustainable and environmentally friendly development and creating an international climate of peace and security among the nations of this planet. Any aid programme must be administered responsibly through good governance in an honest, open and transparent manner.

I am pleased that we have agreed on the need to establish a Peacebuilding Commission by the end of the year. The Commission can fill a vital role in post-conflict recovery and consolidation of sustainable peace.

I am also pleased that we have agreed on the establishment of a Human Rights Council, but I wish to stress that such a body must be endowed with genuine authority. I welcome the decision to strengthen the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and to provide it with the funds necessary for its activities.

Human rights go hand in hand with democracy, which is why Latvia supports the establishment of a

Democracy Fund. I am firmly convinced that such a fund could provide valuable assistance to those countries that have embarked on the path of consolidating democratic political systems and the rule of law.

A major step forward is our unequivocal condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Terrorism is a scourge that requires the concerted efforts of the entire international community to be defeated and defeated it must be. We need to achieve rapid progress on concluding a comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

For the past 12 years, we have been engaged in discussions about changes to the Security Council. Although practically everyone agrees on the need to reform this important United Nations body and to render it more representative of today's geopolitical realities, no consensus has been reached regarding the manner in which that should be done. It promises to be one of the most difficult issues to resolve, but we should nevertheless not abandon our efforts to reach a feasible accord by the end of this year.

The United Nations has recently gone through some difficult times. We must never forget the many years of devoted service and sacrifice on the part of the majority of the United Nations workers. Unfortunately, we have also seen cases of graft, theft and embezzlement in the United Nations administrative structures. We have heard horror stories of women and children being raped and abused by individual blue helmet peacekeepers. That is why we must take some hard and responsible decisions and that is why we must implement some resolute measures to ensure that such major transgressions never happen again. We must do what is required to strengthen and reform this Organization, for, despite its imperfections, the world does need the United Nations. It needs it now more than ever before.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will now hear a statement from His Excellency Mr. Festus Mogae, President of the Republic of Botswana.

President Mogae: Five years ago we convened here in New York to usher in a new millennium. With great enthusiasm and hope, we then resolved to tackle the key challenges facing our world. In particular, we committed ourselves to fight extreme poverty, preventable diseases, human conflict, environmental degradation and global warming. The resulting Millennium Declaration that was adopted has become the framework by which we have set ourselves targets to ensure that we take action to build a better world for all our people. In our collective commitment as Member States of this body, rich and poor, large and small, weak and strong, we have recognized an obligation to work together in order to create a more just and more equitable global order. We also then realized that, by virtue of its universality, the United Nations remains the only vehicle through which we can realize our universal aspirations.

The challenges facing the United Nations today are daunting. If anything, they have become more complex and more demanding than they were 60 years ago. Botswana believes that to enhance the role and relevance of the United Nations and to keep it so that it can respond to the evolving challenges of the twenty-first century, this summit must move forward in key areas, namely, the implementation of previously agreed international development goals, overcoming threats to international peace and security, ensuring enhanced respect for human rights and the rule of law, and achieving long-sought institutional reform. Botswana is convinced that through collective measures we can overcome these challenges. In this regard, the Monterrey Consensus provides a framework for the global community to mobilize financial resources. Progress will also be enhanced if the commitments made at the recent G-8 Summit in Scotland are fully and expeditiously implemented. We welcome here the commitment by a number of developed countries to increase their development expenditure to 0.7% of their GNI between now and 2015. With respect to trade, Botswana encourages accelerated progress in the current Doha round negotiations, which could pave the way for the round itself to be completed by next year.

The High-level Panel of Eminent Persons has reconfirmed the interrelationship between development, human rights, peace and security. It is our responsibility to find further consensus on these issues in the context of the new threats and opportunities that face us all over this globalized world.

We in Botswana condemn terrorism in all its manifestations. We believe that the international community should be able to agree on a comprehensive convention on terrorism on the basis of a common definition and a common understanding of what

constitutes terrorist acts. This session should endeavour to reach agreement on these two related issues.

Conflicts on our own continent are naturally of particular concern to us. Currently a number of African countries are under Security Council consideration and also account for a significant portion of the United Nations peacekeeping budget. The resolution of these conflicts can go a long way toward ensuring the economic and social development of the wider African region, as well as that of the affected countries themselves. To this end, there is need for greater cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union to strengthen conflict prevention and peacekeeping mechanisms.

The debate on United Nations reform has been going on for a long time. After 12 years of negotiation on Security Council reform, the time is now ripe to move forward, and in 60 years of existence the membership of the United Nations has grown from 51 to 191 Member States. This underscores the need to transform this critical organ in order to make it more representative of our world of today, through increased membership and improved working methods. Admittedly, this summit faces difficult decisions on the reform of the Security Council, but the recommendations made by the High-level Panel provide us with a guide for consensus. In this respect, no position should be embraced as if it were a dogma, for the status quo is not in our collective interest. For our part, Botswana is prepared to be flexible in negotiations conducted in good faith.

A consensus has now emerged on the need to revitalize the General Assembly in its role as the deliberative policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. In this regard, Botswana shares the view that the role and authority of the Assembly must be reasserted and its President should play a greater leadership role in refocusing its agenda. Botswana has, over the years, demonstrated commitment to the principles of democracy, social justice, human rights and the rule of law. These very principles continue to motivate our commitment to ensuring that human rights issues receive prominence in our global agenda. We therefore support measures that are intended to strengthen the focus on human rights issues including the creation of a new Human Rights Council. Guaranteeing the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms is one aspect of the broader mandate of the United Nations to protect our populations. In this day and age we can no longer afford to stand back if a country fails to protect its citizens against grave human rights abuses. In this respect, we embrace the concept of "responsibility to protect".

Another welcome initiative that Botswana supports is the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission. We are convinced that this important post-conflict recovery mechanism can create the opportunity for millions of people to achieve sustainable development where before there was turmoil and despair. Botswana commends the Secretary-General for his ongoing efforts to implement management reform of the United Nations. To better facilitate the mandates we entrust to him, the Secretary-General will require not only adequate resources, but also greater authority, so as to ensure that the Organization is able to rapidly respond to evolving priorities.

In conclusion, this summit provides us all with a historic opportunity to make far-reaching decisions on the reform of the Organization. Botswana's view is that reform is imperative if the United Nations is to have the ability to respond to the critical challenges of the twenty-first century.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will now hear a statement from His Excellency Mr. Pervez Musharraf, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

President Musharraf: It is a privilege to address this sixtieth session of the General Assembly. We are participating in an historic event — the endeavour to establish a just world order for the twenty-first century. The decisions we take here will have far-reaching consequences. It is, therefore, our solemn responsibility to bequeath a legacy of hope and peace to future generations. We cannot afford to fail.

Thanks to the Secretary-General and President Jean Ping, a year's process of reflection and discussion has produced ideas and proposals to enhance international security, development and human rights.

This High-level Plenary Meeting offers us an opportunity to recommit ourselves to the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter. Let us pledge

to make the United Nations a more effective and relevant institution for the twenty-first century.

We believe that international security can be best promoted when every State sees peace as being in its best interest; when States believe that they can realize their interests through mutual cooperation; when the supremacy of equitable principles is established over the realities of unequal power; when Member States agree to utilize the United Nations to harmonize their policies and reconcile their interests.

The Security Council should work openly on behalf of the general membership. The Council should become more representative, not by adding a new elite, but by reflecting more fully the entire spectrum of the United Nations membership. This can be achieved only through patient dialogue and general consensus.

The challenges confronting international peace and security are formidable and many. Terrorism and the threat from weapons of mass destruction are among them. Yet, even as we address new threats, we should not, and we cannot, ignore the legacy of festering problems left by the past. Peace and justice must come to the people of Palestine as well as of Jammu and Kashmir.

We must be prepared not only to proclaim our principles but also to defend them and, above all, live up to them. United Nations resolutions, especially decisions of the Security Council, must be implemented.

It is in this spirit that Pakistan is pursuing the composite dialogue with India. We want the dialogue process to result in the start of a new era of peace and cooperation in South Asia. Our nations must not remain trapped by hate and history in a cycle of confrontation and conflict. For this to happen, it is essential to find a just solution of the dispute over Jammu and Kashmir, acceptable to Pakistan and India and above all to the people of Kashmir.

Today, terrorism is a primary threat to world order. We must fight terrorism, in all its forms, outlaw it and eliminate it. We need a comprehensive strategy for success. At the same time, we need to understand and address the motives behind terrorist acts. These may not justify terrorism, but they do explain it. To eliminate terrorist violence, we will need to eliminate it in the minds of potential terrorists. No religion sanctions terrorism. The motives of terrorists, however misguided, are always political. I have suggested a strategy of enlightened moderation, which can ensure success in eliminating terrorism and extremism. I trust that this will be reflected in the deliberations of the new commission created by the Secretary-General on an alliance of civilizations.

Weapons of mass destruction must not fall into the hands of terrorists. To prevent this, we must aim to eliminate both the terrorists and the weapons of mass destruction. The catastrophic consequences of a nuclear war make it imperative to prevent one from ever taking place. Both the proliferation and the perpetual possession of nuclear weapons pose an unacceptable global danger. We must evolve a new consensus to achieve disarmament and non-proliferation.

We also need to prevent the destabilizing accumulation and build-up of conventional weapons and forces, especially in regions of tension such as the Middle East, South Asia and North-East Asia. Pakistan will continue to promote a nuclear and conventional weapons restraint regime in South Asia.

Peace and development are interdependent. Although action for development must be largely local, it is critically dependent — in our globalized world — on the external economic environment. Paradoxically, globalization has increased both poverty and prosperity. The rules of international trade and finance and technology access are weighted against the poor and the weak. In fact, the poor should be offered a "development handicap" to enable them to successfully integrate into a world market of unequal players.

The empowerment of women through an articulated strategy, such as we have initiated in Pakistan, is particularly crucial for bringing about social change. Respect for human rights is an integral element of both peace and development. Economic rights are as important as political and civil rights. A hungry man is never a free man. The new human rights architecture we will create — such as the proposed Human Rights Council — should advance human rights through cooperation and mutual support. Genocide, ethnic cleansing and similar grave violations must be prevented. As a first step, the United Nations should be given a standing authority to send a fact-finding mission to the area where a conflict has broken out.

Pakistan has contributed actively and constructively to the preparation of this High-level Plenary Meeting' s important decisions. We shall work equally to ensure that our decisions are translated into action.

At this meeting, let us resolve to make poverty history, peace permanent and freedom universal.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will now hear a statement from His Excellency Mr. Robert Gabriel Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

President Mugabe: Let me begin by congratulating the Co-Chairpersons for accepting the onerous task of presiding over this epochal event. I am confident that their able leadership will successfully carry us through this session.

Five years ago, we met here in New York at the Millennium Summit and agreed on eight development goals that we believed were realistic and achievable. We were hopeful that, all things being equal, we would be able to meet the targets we had set for ourselves in order to achieve those Goals.

It is now for us to review the progress we have made in implementing the Millennium Declaration. Regrettably, for many developing countries, including Zimbabwe, all things have not been equal. Our national progress report, launched recently, shows that our efforts have been seriously affected by recurrent droughts and floods, HIV and AIDS and, of course, unilateral sanctions imposed on us by countries that do not wish us well.

As a result, we are lagging behind on many of our targets. While the challenges are great, so is our commitment to achieving our MDGs, even with our limited means. Our achievements in the area of universal primary education are a testimony to that resolve. We have also committed ourselves to addressing extreme poverty and hunger by redistributing land to the majority of our citizens, who had been condemned to conditions of squalor by years of colonialism and its vestiges.

In reviewing the progress made towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, we must have the courage to go beyond the mere posturing that is characterized by name-calling, finger-pointing and false accusations. Developing countries should be accorded policy space to develop their own strategies tailored to their developmental needs, within a framework that provides for accountability, transparency and integrity in the system. Development cannot proceed in the context of ideological rigidities and models that are not applicable to the diverse conditions and circumstances that exist in developing countries.

This is why, in global economic governance and the shaping of policies affecting international economic relations, it is important to ensure the existence of an inclusive process of decision-making in which developing countries can play a meaningful role. The simple fact is that every Government has the primary responsibility to promote and safeguard the economic and social development of its people. International efforts should only complement national programmes.

The challenge facing the attainment of the MDGs has not been the strategies and objectives as defined; rather, it lies within the degree of implementation. Not enough has been done to fulfil the commitments undertaken in the various United Nations conferences and summits. We are, therefore, concerned about the continuous, significant and clearly calculated decline in official development assistance (ODA) in recent years and reiterate the urgent need for a substantial increase of ODA, as agreed at Monterrey, Mexico.

As we deliberate on the institutional reform of the United Nations, let us do so in a manner that is open, transparent and consultative and that will deepen and consolidate multilateralism. Let us seek to secure the world by addressing the root causes of the present insecurity, which are to be found in poverty, hunger and disease on the one hand, and intolerance, double standards, xenophobia, selectivity and self-righteousness in our approach to issues on the other. A reformed United Nations should be one that plays a key role in coordinating development issues. The vision that we must present for a future United Nations should not be one filled with vague concepts that provide an opportunity for those States that seek to interfere in the internal affairs of other States. Concepts such as "humanitarian intervention" and the "responsibility to protect" need careful scrutiny in order to test the motives of their proponents.

The ongoing consultations on the restructuring of the United Nations are a matter of extreme importance to us and to the rest of the world. The current skewed

power structures in the world body cannot be condoned on any conceivable grounds of democracy. Organs of the United Nations, including the Security Council, must be restructured to reflect the full will of nations great and small. We need to avoid situations where a few countries, by virtue of their privileged positions, their wealth or their military might, dictate the agenda for everybody else. We have witnessed instances where the sovereignty and territorial integrity of small and weak countries have been violated by the mighty and powerful, in defiance of agreed rules of procedures and the provisions of the United Nations Charter — even on the basis of contrived lies: lies told in order to create a basis for aggression. And we have seen that aggression occur, even in the context of the so-called coalition. A coalition to defy international law becomes an aggressor coalition; indeed, it becomes a coalition of evil.

The international community needs, as it has done now, to return to the drawing board to rediscover, reassert and pursue in a practical manner the agenda for peace, security and development for all through fostering genuine cooperation based on respect for the sovereignty, equality and territorial integrity of all States big or small, rich or poor, mighty or not mighty.

It is within this context that we call upon the international community to remain true to the original principles and objectives of the United Nations Charter to achieve peace, security and development. This will allow us to bequeath to future generations a far safer, more prosperous and more stable world. It is my hope that, as we conclude our deliberations at this session, we will have asserted our commitment to those ideals.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Abdelaziz Bouteflika, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria and former President of the General Assembly.

President Bouteflika (*spoke in Arabic*): It would not be excessively pessimistic to say that the world in which we live is in a bad state. Apart from terrorism — which is now appearing almost everywhere, and the list of whose victims and material damage continues to get longer — natural disasters in various places are striking populations with unprecedented violence, leaving death in their wake. As for the environment, it is deteriorating dangerously because of the excessive consumption of natural resources and because of the spread of industrialization that is more interested in immediate profit than in the future of humankind. All of this is happening in spite of the commitments entered into at the Millennium Summit to fight poverty, disease and misery.

Today, we should rely on our Organization to coordinate and stimulate our efforts. This Organization was created for another era, and it quickly appeared that it could not face up to the problems of the modern world. International peace and security are fragile, and what has been labelled as clashes among cultures and interests has become a tangible conflict. However, the United Nations represents a valuable achievement that has to be reinforced and preserved. It needs serious revamping, which would strengthen its dynamism and allow us to have a better take on realities today. This reform should not be limited to an expansion of and increase in the power or the membership of the Security Council. There are other aspects that are just as important, on which we can have agreement.

I would like to emphasize the important role to be played by the General Assembly, which is entrusted with global sovereignty. We should also take another look at all of the institutions in the system and, at any rate, it should be clear to all that this desire to revamp the Organization should not cast doubt on our unswerving dedication to the Charter of the United Nations and its principles, nor our faith in the virtue and the value of the rule of law and of international action.

The untenable injustice done to the Palestinian people is further proof of the failure of the international order over the past six decades. The situation does not comply with international legality, as is also the case with the decolonization of the Western Sahara, which continues to be an urgent task for the Organization, one for which it must assume full responsibility.

Our contribution to the support and updating of our international institutions is based on our aspirations and hope that as a result of the joining of all ideas and opinions, there will be light at the end of the tunnel for all humankind for the future.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Nestor Carlos Kirchner, President of the Argentine Republic.

President Kirchner (*spoke in Spanish*): Five years ago, the Governments of our countries gathered in this very hall, hoping to work together in solving some of the most urgent and serious problems confronting our peoples. That is how the Millennium Declaration arose, and, with it, a renewed commitment by the international community to multilateralism and respect for human dignity. Concrete goals in development were promoted, aimed at resolving the imperative issues of hunger, poverty, infant mortality rates, diseases such as HIV-AIDS and malaria and other pandemics, and issues of social and legal gender inequality. The assessment of what we have achieved in these few years is far from satisfactory. The severity of the situation is basically the same. The modest advances in some issues, cannot, however, weaken our will or numb our conscience. Poverty, hunger and disease continue to afflict a vast proportion of women and men around the world. The absence of the rule of law and the massive violations of human rights in various parts of the world cause great suffering and deepen political instability and civil conflicts. The new and grave threats to international security have permeated the whole spectrum of international debate. Poverty, social inequality, injustice, social exclusion and the estrangement between expectations and reality bring about an element of instability, working against the strengthening of democracy and development.

A large part of the problem lies perhaps in the lack of correspondence between statements, true expressions of wish, and action. This is evident in two key areas, debt and international trade. The persistence of discriminatory and inequitable policies in international trade is part of this list of impediments to development, both for the poorest nations and for middle-income countries, such as my own, Argentina.

The prevalence of an ideological component in the policies of international credit institutions is also distressing. The so-called orthodox approach to the debt is an approach that has shown its shortcomings and inefficiency and that has worsened the conditions of poverty in the developing world, and this is perhaps the area where the prevalence of this component becomes most evident. Economic development, security and human rights are the basic pillars of the United Nations, and therefore the simultaneous progress that we achieve in all these three areas is the best assurance of international peace and the well-being of humanity.

With great effort, Argentina is returning to the path of development and has achieved sustained growth in its economy, while at the same time significantly reducing unemployment and poverty indices. After emerging from the crisis, indicators show a sustained growth in the economy, and a surplus in the fiscal external accounts, together with a recovery in national reserves. Argentina grew 8.8 per cent in 2003, 9 per cent in 2004 and over 9 per cent in the first half of 2005. The consolidated primary surplus is 5 per cent of GDP and reserves have increased from nearly ten billion dollars to over twenty-five billion. Exports this year will exceed forty billion dollars, with an estimated growth of about 15 per cent.

Unemployment dropped from 24 per cent in 2003 to 12.1 per cent over the first half of 2005. Poverty has dropped from 57.5 per cent to 40.2 per cent and absolute poverty rates have come down from 27.5 per cent in 2003 to 15 percent in 2004 and continue to decline. The real general salary index has risen 16 per cent.

Since overcoming default, Argentina has been strengthening its position as a target for foreign investment. Primary education enrolment is over 91.5 per cent. Illiteracy is under 3 per cent and women's literacy rates are over 97.4 per cent. Women's participation is growing and as a result, women hold over 33 per cent of seats in the House of Representatives and 43 per cent of seats in the Senate. Infant mortality rates have dropped significantly from 16.8 per 1,000 to the current 13 per 1,000. Public health programmes are being implemented now covering the entire population. Drinking water supplies and sewage systems are being expanded. Through an agreement with Brazil, medicines are going to be produced in order to cover the entire population infected with AIDS at an affordable price. Regrettably, throughout this process of recovery, expansion and transformation, we did not have the support of the International Monetary Fund, which had provided support until only weeks before the convertibility regime. During its crisis, Argentina made net payments of about 13.5 billion dollars.

Like many developing countries, we continue to endure both this archaic understanding of the indebtedness issue and an international trade system that is unfair to agricultural products, where subsidies and non-tariff barriers in developed countries continue

to restrain our countries from full growth based on their genuine resources.

In this sense we call for the Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, which is to be held in Hong Kong, China, to fulfil the unfulfilled promise of placing development at the centre of international trade.

We are attentively following the international debate on the concept of the sustainability of external debt.

We believe that international finances are too important to be left in the hands of concerted interests that affect the stability of markets, discriminate against the small investor and spawn pro-cyclical policies.

That is why, in various forums, we have proposed modifications that increase the transparency of the international financial system, free this Organization from certain financial lobbies and bring enhanced stability to the capital flow, which promotes small investors.

There is neither ideology nor politics in this. We show concrete facts indicating that these financial organizations did not perform the role that they must perform.

Looking ahead, our country has structured a debt reduction strategy designed to gain degrees of independence as it implements its plans for development and the growth of its economy.

In this regard, we wish to reaffirm that payment of external financial commitments must not be made to the detriment of resources pledged to social areas, such as education, health, housing and employment. We shall be firm in maintaining this position when dealing with the international credit organizations, and we reiterate our call for increased transparency and democracy and for a deep restructuring and revision of their policies, in order to ensure fairness and efficiency.

Along these lines, Argentina has, since 2004, been a co-sponsor of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights resolution on the effects of structural adjustment policies and foreign debt on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights, which alludes clearly to the relationship between external indebtedness and the impossibility of effective enjoyment of human rights.

In conclusion, I wish to express the fervent hope of the people of Argentina that the United Nations will continue to guide us along the path towards peace, justice and development.

Many resolutions of this General Assembly and the Special Political and Decolonization Committee have established that the question of the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands are a special colonial situation that must be resolved through bilateral negotiations between my country and the United Kingdom. The Decolonization Committee has made repeated declarations to that effect, and we greatly value its action in seeking a solution to this question.

We once again reaffirm the constant readiness of our country to reach a final, fair and peaceful solution to this sovereignty dispute that is of central concern to the people of Argentina. We, therefore, urge the United Kingdom to respond promptly to the call of the international community to resume negotiations.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will now hear an address by Mr. Benjamin William Mkapa, President of the United Republic of Tanzania.

President Mkapa: In 2000, world leaders undertook an in-depth review of decades of global efforts and unfulfilled promises to fight unacceptable levels of poverty. They agreed on shared universal values, and they ushered in hopes for timed and measurable development goals, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Today, five years later, leaders stand accused of having failed to live up to their commitments. The Millennium Development Goals reflect our shared values about basic human rights — the right to live in dignity. We cannot turn our backs on these basic values and the duties they impose on all countries and Governments. To do so would devalue our common humanity. We should, instead, renew our commitment, individually and collectively, to the MDGs and to their full integration into our national domestic policies, international development strategies, policies and actions.

For too long, there has been an unnecessary debate about whether the solution to poverty in Africa and elsewhere is more money. Of course, it is not simply a question of money. But, without money, few

strategies, if any, could succeed. Likewise, good governance is necessary; but it alone will not eradicate poverty.

The developing countries are not blaming rich and industrialized countries for everything that is wrong or unfulfilled. What they are asking of them is a new commitment to keep their word. Developing countries, for their part, must fulfil their commitments to mobilize domestic resources, reform institutions to respond to national priorities and adopt effective, nationally owned economic and social policies to spur economic growth. The broader commitments to democracy, human rights and good governance must also be discharged.

Developed countries, for their part, must fulfil their responsibilities by increasing the flow and improving the effectiveness of development assistance; they must ensure that the Doha trade round is truly development-oriented; they must embrace wider and deeper debt relief; and they must facilitate technology transfer.

I thank the few rich countries that have attained or exceeded the target of 0.7 per cent of national income as official development assistance (ODA). I thank the European Union for having a timetable for the different member countries to reach this target by the year 2015. I thank the G-8 leaders who, in their Gleneagles Summit, agreed to increase annual aid flows and cancel the debts of least developed countries. I call on them not to backslide on these honourable commitments.

Then there is the unnecessary debate about absorptive capacity. Developing countries must be assessed severally, not collectively, to determine whether they have the system of governance and the absorptive capacity to benefit from increased levels of resources.

Let me use the example of my own country with regard to education goals. Using our own enhanced domestic revenues, increased ODA and debt relief, we were able to invest heavily in education, improving access and quality. We removed school fees for primary education, and the net enrolment rate increased from 58.8 per cent in 2000 to 90.5 per cent last year; and gender parity has been attained.

By 2006, Tanzania will have attained the second Millennium Development Goal, nine years ahead of target. Yes, where a developing country and its development partners all fulfil their responsibilities, it is possible to fast-track the attainment of the MDGs.

It never occurred to me that this body, meeting at such a high level, could have problems, not in agreeing to eradicate, but only in recommitting itself to halve poverty by 2015. I seriously urge the world to focus more on preventing crises than on responding to them. When a jumbo jet crashes, we all rush in with assistance; but we forget that every day 30,000 children die unnecessarily from poverty-related preventable causes; this loss is equivalent to 100 jumbo jet crashes every day.

A number of blueprints for success in the war on poverty have been promulgated since 2000. These include the Monterrey Consensus; the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization; the Commission for Africa; the United Nations Millennium Project and others. Let us now start their implementation.

Aid is not charity; it is an investment in peace, security and human solidarity. By not addressing the causes of poverty, we are institutionalizing the business of charity. It does not make political sense; it does not make economic sense; it does not make ethical sense.

I commit my Government and country to the timed pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals and ask all countries, rich and poor, at the very minimum to implement fully the outcome document from this meeting, for which I commend the negotiators.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. László Sólyom, President of the Republic of Hungary.

President Sólyom: It is indeed an honour and privilege for me to attend this High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations. Without the United Nations, today's world would be a place with less security and freedom, less social justice and democracy.

On the other hand, today we face unprecedented challenges and grave menaces. Here, I have in mind terrorist acts, the danger of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and internal armed conflicts. We continue to be haunted by shocking human suffering from hunger, poverty and disease and extraordinary

natural disasters. We also have to confront the serious degradation of the environment.

We fully concur with the Secretary-General's report, in which he states that challenges in the areas of security, development and human rights are interlinked. We should respond to these challenges accordingly.

Terrorism is unacceptable under any circumstances. States must protect and defend their citizens against terrorist acts by all necessary means. At the same time, Member States are under an obligation to safeguard human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. In this respect, I wish to express my hope that the General Assembly will finalize a counter-terrorist strategy and conclude a comprehensive convention on terrorism.

Since the establishment of the United Nations, our world has fundamentally changed. Our civilization has entered a new era defined by an explosion of communications, global trade and such other interactions. Nevertheless, the fundamental values that motivated the creation of the United Nations are still valid. The core of these values is the dignity of all human beings. States need to find answers to the new challenges, while maintaining the same respect for human dignity and fundamental rights.

The issue of the environment deserves increased attention. Let me emphasize the responsibility of the international community as a whole. We need a new philosophy that takes due account of the rights of future generations. States must strive to maintain the level of environmental protection they have achieved. Along with others, Hungary favours a more coherent institutional framework of international environmental governance, leading to the establishment of a United Nations environment organization. Such an organization could best serve to protect our planet and should act as a guardian for future generations.

Hungary also supports the creation of an effective United Nations Human Rights Council. We also highly appreciate the move to establish a Democracy Fund.

I am proud to announce that an International Centre for Democratic Transition has been set up in Budapest. The Centre will promote research and offer assistance for those who seek advice. It will be an open and international institution. The Centre is the initiative of Hungary, and we do hope that you will find it worthy of support.

By the same token, Hungary is keen to urge further progress in the international promotion and protection of minority rights by the United Nations. We will not spare any effort to make this happen.

We need a renewed and reformed organization and must rededicate ourselves to the vision of the founding fathers. Hungary will be a reliable partner in achieving this goal.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar.

Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani (*spoke in Arabic*): Five years ago, in this Hall, heads of State or Government adopted the Millennium Declaration. It was a historic moment, when world leaders gathered at the turn of the century to put forth a new vision in response to a changing reality. It is a vision that can strengthen the United Nations system and give it new momentum.

Today, we again meet to search for means to activate previously concluded agreements. Allow me on this occasion to congratulate Mr. Jan Eliasson on his election to the presidency of the current session of the General Assembly. I wish him and this high-level meeting every success. I would also like to thank Co-Chairperson Jean Ping for steering the proceedings of the fifty-ninth session and for his welcome contribution to the preparations for this meeting.

I want to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General for the great sense of responsibility he has displayed as head of this international Organization. I commend him for his efforts in preparing a comprehensive report on the progress made in achieving security, development and human rights for all.

The accomplishments of the United Nations should not be underestimated. Furthermore, the Organization has had to contend with difficulties that cannot be ignored. While we may hold divergent views about the outcome of its efforts, we do not question the need for it or the imperative to support its bodies and activities so that the international community can meet the challenges before it.

We agree with the findings of the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. In order to rise to the challenges of the twenty-first

century, we must develop a new concept of collective security. This concept should allow us to define responsibilities, design appropriate strategies and draw up roles for institutions to increase their efficiency and effectiveness.

We also agree with the proposals of the Secretary-General to accord an equal share of attention to development, security and human rights, which are the three primary purposes of the United Nations Charter. We cannot pursue one at the expense of the other two.

It is high time that we grant development the attention it deserves. We cannot consider it to be of secondary importance. Together with the two other objectives of security and respect for human rights, it should be accorded priority status. Achieving security and preserving the integrity of human rights cannot be meaningfully pursued while vast regions of the world are deprived of the minimum requirements for life in dignity.

It is not a coincidence that the most impoverished regions are the ones suffering the most protracted conflicts, where human rights are often trampled and threatened. While issues pertaining to security and human rights are among the international concerns that should not be underestimated, development is a pivotal objective that deserves to be given utmost importance.

The State of Qatar endorses the outcome of the Millennium Summit. We believe that the Development Goals are primary objectives that must be achieved in order to meet the challenge of extreme poverty and address its painful repercussions, achieve gender equality, advance education and preserve the environment. All these basic rights are consecrated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals implies creation of the conditions at the national and international levels required to mobilize the resources needed for that purpose. In this regard, the implementation of the Plan of Implementation defined at the Johannesburg Summit remains the main guideline for the financing of development. The Monterrey Consensus provided the tools needed to translate this plan into tangible results. Together with the Millennium Declaration, these two reference documents constitute an integrated plan on how the financing components of the development package can advance international development efforts.

Developing countries have already begun assuming more responsibilities by drawing up their own development strategies. However, they are still facing a major problem, namely a lack of adequate financial resources to achieve the Millennium Goals and other previously agreed international goals.

Therefore, it is necessary to increase the resources and the flows to at least the minimum level required, since developed countries have pledged to achieve those goals within a framework that allows the United Nations to play its role in this context.

We in the State of Qatar call for the international financing system to take humanitarian aspects into consideration, in order to allow for more grants and for initiatives that would facilitate debt reduction and an improvement in the standard of living. We also stress the importance of establishing an international multilateral trade system characterized by fairness and equality for all.

In this regard, we welcome the decision taken by the World Trade Organization, August 2004, on the full implementation of the Doha Ministerial Declaration, particularly where it deals with development issues. We also stress the importance of completing the first round of the Doha multilateral trade negotiations by 2006.

The development we desire calls for good governance based on respect for law and popular participation, which, in itself, will help democracy to spread and will allow for the establishment of strong institutions that can be held accountable and can promote sound and fair legal systems. In addition, such institutions would provide all the political and cultural conditions which make up an enabling environment for development. We support the reference to the establishment of the fund for democracy in the paper submitted by the President of the General Assembly. We believe that it would promote and accelerate development. We would like to declare our willingness to participate in such efforts and other popular efforts in support of democracy. We pledge 10 million dollars to support this fund for democracy in the hope that its establishment will represent a practical step toward achieving the prosperity of peoples.

The threats faced by the international community at present will be with us for decades, they are not strictly related to peace and international security but derive from poverty, endemic diseases, deterioration of the environment, armed conflicts, violence, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, transnational organized crime and the deprivations born of not reaping the fruits of development.

Our recent experiences have proved that such threats can no longer be faced individually or unilaterally. Rather, they require — as has been seen recently in the case of terrorism — collective efforts and close international cooperation based on the Charter of the United Nations and the provisions of international law. Today's world necessitates our collective efforts in view of the interdependence brought about by globalization.

As to the role of the United Nations, it is essential that cooperation among its members be strengthened in order to affirm its identity as an entity that embodies human aspirations for peaceful coexistence and mutual interest among nations. It is necessary to promote and strengthen United Nations organs to make them capable of facing present and future challenges, and to enable the Organization to deal positively with changing realities in our world.

This High-level Plenary Meeting represents an opportunity to discuss how and by what means the role of the United Nations may be enhanced. The State of Qatar, basing itself on the Charter of the United Nations and the rule of international law, believes that enhancement of the role of the United Nations will depend on the extent to which multilateral actions expands in the face of international problems.

One of the gravest problems at present is terrorism. We believe that there is an urgent need for collective efforts in the face of that scourge. We condemn all forms of terrorism and are always interested in coordinating all international efforts to combat it, whether by joining international or regional conventions, or by providing necessary financial and human resources. We are ready to join the long-sought international convention aimed at combating terrorism, which we hope will be formulated multilaterally. It is important that this convention arrive at a definition of terrorism that will distinguish between criminal acts of terrorism and a people's right to fight occupation militarily.

Human rights are governed by rules and laws that should be applied. Recently, many organizations that work in the field of human rights have emerged at the international, national and regional levels. Their work in that field is in addition to the important work conducted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

In spite of various accusations levelled against those organizations — accusations of double standards or of spreading alien concepts and focusing only on political and civil rights while ignoring cultural, social and economic rights — we would like to reassert that the universality of human rights should not impair the diversity of cultural specificities, which should be given due respect. All such efforts should be appreciated and respected.

We would like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his attention to the cause of human rights. He has submitted a proposal on the subject to transform the present Commission on Human Rights into a permanent council of limited membership. Members of this council would be elected from two thirds of the membership of the General Assembly. This council would exclude countries that do not have a good record in human rights. We support such a proposal. However, we are afraid that a reduced council with limited membership may not be able to represent the large membership of the international Organization or deal with all the different issues and aspects of human rights. Therefore, we hope that this proposal will be considered and negotiated further at the multilateral level, with a view to an agreement by Governments that a body should be established under the auspices of the General Assembly with a membership that is sizeable enough to quell any suspicion of selectivity and to guarantee its efficiency and good performance. Reform of the Security Council and expansion of its membership have become an integral part of activating and invigorating the role of the United Nations itself. We are, therefore, looking forward to more deliberations among the Member States concerning the Council's functioning and its relations with other bodies of the Organization, notably the Economic and Social Council.

We draw attention to the need to enhance the Economic and Social Council's functions and provide it with the resources required to discharge its mandate.

We also support reform of the Secretariat to allow it to perform its functions and activities with transparency. Monitoring and accountability mechanisms must be put in place to raise the professional competence of its international civil servants.

In this context, I believe we should continue to examine closely the issues at hand in negotiations at the intergovernmental level until we develop a consensus that serves the Organization's interests.

Two years ago, the Secretary-General stated that the United Nations stood at a crossroads between multilateralism and unilateralism. Qatar has opted for promoting multilateralism and has lived by this choice. A case in point was the Second South Summit of the Group of 77, held in Doha in June 2005, which reaffirmed the importance of promoting multifaceted international cooperation between the North and the South.

Qatar would like to stress once again its desire to be part of the international community's pursuit of multilateralism. We believe that the outcome of this meeting will help to widen the horizons of the new generations. We need a strong United Nations that can celebrate its sixtieth anniversary and concomitantly work to build a world that lives in peace and enjoys security and prosperity.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): Now the General Assembly will hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Paul Biya, the President of Cameroon.

President Biya (*spoke in French*): First of all, allow me to say how pleased I am that Gabon, a friend, and Sweden, whose generosity to the Third World is known to us all, are Co-Chairpersons of this important High-level Plenary Meeting. I believe that this symbolizes the essential solidarity between the industrialized North and the developing South. This solidarity is, I believe, an essential dimension of tomorrow's world.

Allow me also to have a special thought for the victims of Hurricane Katrina, which recently struck the Gulf Coast of the United States indiscriminately and with rare violence. I wish to express to the people of America and its leaders the compassion and solidarity of the people of Cameroon.

The sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations that we are celebrating today provides us with an opportunity to assess achievements since the Millennium Declaration, which we adopted here five years ago and which inspired immense hope at that time. The goals that we established then are still valid. It is indeed in the interest of all rich and poor peoples to push back poverty and pandemics and to remedy violations of democracy and human rights, which often lead to civil war and terrorism.

The countries of the South, including my own, promptly took courageous measures to strengthen their democratic system and the rule of law, to improve governance and in particular combat corruption, and to re-establish the health of their public finances. These measures have sometimes had a heavy social cost. Tangible results have been achieved. As far as Cameroon is concerned, these efforts will continue.

For their part, our development partners, the Group of Eight, the European Union and various friendly countries, have recently taken measures with regard to debt and official development assistance, for which I sincerely thank them. This demonstration of political will deserves recognition, as it strengthens solidarity, the importance of which I have just indicated.

Nonetheless, these measures are incomplete, particularly measures concerning the cancellation of the multilateral debt of 18 countries, including 14 African countries. I believe that we need to go further and more quickly if we wish to achieve the Millennium Development Goals within a reasonable period of time. This would be fair compensation for those peoples who have invested considerable efforts for many years, even made sacrifices, assuming responsibility for their own progress, creating a modern society and becoming full-fledged players in their development.

I call on the international financial institutions and donor countries to show understanding and to arrange as soon as possible a general cancellation of the multilateral and bilateral debt which is currently drowning our economies.

Likewise, we should step up trade talks in the Doha round so that countries of the South, particularly those of sub-Saharan Africa, can finally play a

significant role in international trade. It is in the interest of our countries, which are already suffering from the unequal terms of trade, that our priorities should be better taken into account. A significant gesture is also expected from our trade partners with regard to the removal of agricultural subsidies, particularly in favour of African cotton, which is a major source of income for millions of our farmers. Those of our products which are unable to compete on the international market, particularly bananas, should continue to enjoy special treatment for some time. In general, it is desirable that the North open further its markets to our products in order to allow us to play a greater role in the globalized economy.

Furthermore, I would like to recall that Cameroon and the other countries of the Congo Basin, which is the world's second largest forestry reserve, have taken management measures that preserve a sustainable environment and the ecosystem. Our countries are glad to contribute in this way to improving the quality of life on Earth. But it seems to me only fair that the considerable loss in revenue we have suffered should be compensated fairly.

Before concluding, I would like to say a few words with regard to the complex problem of United Nations reform. This gives me the opportunity to congratulate Mr. Jean Ping, President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, on the remarkable way in which he guided the consultations on this particularly delicate question. It is also an opportunity for me to express my appreciation to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for the high quality and the far-reaching nature of the report he has submitted to us.

First of all, with regard to the reform of the Security Council, we knew that the discussions would be difficult. Nobody disputes the fact that the Council's membership should reflect the shape of today's world and that it is necessary to improve its working methods. However, it also needs to be said that the positions of various parties continue to be very divergent.

For its part, Cameroon continues to support the position of the African Union. It goes without saying that, whatever solution is adopted, countries that wish to become permanent members of the Security Council must have demonstrated firm commitment to the principles and decisions of the United Nations and its organs.

Cameroon also considers that any reform should ensure proper balance among the organs of the United Nations. The revitalization of the General Assembly and the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council should be considered as priorities.

I believe also that the International Court of Justice should have a central role in the institutional machinery of our Organization. I am convinced that the settlement of disputes or conflicts through the legal system continues to be the surest method of ensuring international peace and security.

Clearly, implementation of any reforms will require considerable patience and a spirit of compromise. I believe it is appropriate, in this context, to quote Jean Jaurès, who said, "history teaches men the difficulty of great tasks and the slow nature of achievements, but it also justifies our invincible hope".

It is my hope that all those who place their confidence and their hopes in the United Nations — and Cameroon is one of them — will be guided by an ideal of solidarity and justice, and that they will do everything possible to ensure that the reform is achieved in an acceptable time frame.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

President Obasanjo: Sir, let me begin by congratulating Ambassador Jan Eliasson on his election as President of the sixtieth session the General Assembly, during which vital events in the life of our Organization will take place. As we mark the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, we are not only reaffirming the vision and the hope of 1945, but we are also hoping to reform the Organization's organs and its working methods so as to make it better able to serve us in today's world, which is radically different from that of 1945.

One such difference is today's global economic landscape, characterized by pockets of affluence and mass, abject poverty.

Five years ago, at the turn of the century, we adopted the Millennium Declaration, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which set targets for us to address major development problems of the world, especially in developing countries. The MDGs emerged from a collective resolve to address

and build on the reinvented notion of partnership between the weak and the strong, between the rich and the poor and among the peoples of the world. While this partnership was premised on shared responsibility, it did not ignore the vital principle of common but differentiated obligations.

In pursuit of the MDGs and of our national economic development objectives, Nigeria has drawn up and embarked upon conscious efforts to realize set targets encapsulated in our National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). NEEDS is a home-grown, people-centred medium-term strategy designed to generate wealth, create employment, reduce poverty and promote value reorientation. Following the implementation of NEEDS, in the past two years our agricultural production has grown by about 7 per cent annually. Industrial capacity utilization has doubled, and gross domestic product (GDP) has grown at an average of more than 6 per cent per annum. In all other sectors, we are making appreciable progress, even as we need more assistance.

In spite of this progress, we recognize that poverty is still acute in our rural areas and that unemployment is still a recurring issue, particularly in our urban areas, where the youth, mostly unskilled, have flocked. Besides, we are conscious that for a developing country like Nigeria, which really wants to transform its economy, we need an annual GDP growth of about 10 per cent. Thus, we still have a big challenge ahead: meeting it will require increased support from our development partners, as well as from investors.

In order to attain the goals of reducing child mortality, improving maternal health and combating HIV/AIDS, Nigeria has initiated health sector reform aimed at raising the standard of primary health care and vastly improving health care delivery services in our hospitals. Early this year, we launched a national health insurance scheme to encourage widespread and timely resort to medical consultation, and to ensure the delivery and development of health care, while providing treatment of illness, as well as prenatal and postnatal care. Among other achievements, child mortality is slightly down, HIV prevalence has declined and the campaigns against polio and malaria are yielding results.

We consider global partnerships in the pursuit of the MDGs to be imperative. For a developing country such as ours, we agree that the primary responsibility for socio-economic development in our country rests with us. Nevertheless, our efforts must be complemented by global support. We need all the assistance we can get from our development partners to make possible the achievement of the Goals set by the Assembly five years ago.

The major problem has been inadequate resources. This is why developed countries should fulfil their own side of the Millennium Declaration, as expressed in the targets set out in the MDGs. As clearly stated in the Millennium Project document, as well as in the report of the Commission for Africa, it is necessary to double the current level of resource flows to Africa if the continent is to meet the MDGs by the year 2015.

Conscious of the vital role that peace and security play in economic and social development, Nigeria considers conflict resolution as a vital precondition for the successful implementation measures for attaining the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. In this regard, Nigeria has been working tirelessly with the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union by intervening to stop conflicts and instituting solutions to the underlying causes of conflicts.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Roh Moo-hyun, President of the Republic of Korea.

President Roh (*spoke in Korean; English text provided by the delegation*): Six decades ago, in the very same year that far-sighted leaders from around the world were preparing to establish the United Nations, the Republic of Korea was set free from the shackles of imperialist colonial rule. Since then the United Nations has been our trusted friend. I am privileged to stand at the podium of such a special friend on this auspicious occasion.

The United Nations has made immense strides in promoting peace and universal values throughout the world. It is perhaps one of the greatest creations of the twentieth century, and I pause to pay tribute to all those who have served its cause with dedication.

We stand at a time of uncertainty as to how the global order will unfold, but the path we must choose remains clear. The new world order of the twenty-first century should be defined by all nations, be they large, small or medium-sized Powers, since it is in the common interest to achieve collective prosperity. This demands a redoubling of efforts to advance global projects that pursue freedom from want and discrimination, both of which lie at the heart of a number of conflicts and repressive situations.

Yet, there is another equally important dimension. The world must completely divest itself of mindsets and vestiges reminiscent of imperialistic tendencies that appear to linger in various forms. Vigilance against a resurgence of major-Power centrism in certain circles is also in order. The leading nations of contemporary international politics should be more introspective in their examination of the past and vision of the future and should also exercise greater self-restraint.

In addition, enhanced efforts are required when it comes to respect for neighbouring countries, forging international consensus and removing sources of antagonism. Not until the great Powers are able to establish a higher cause of peace and common prosperity in the global order will the tension between "power" and "higher cause" be defused.

The promise of such endeavours can be found in the European Union. Europe has moved beyond an order dictated by the logic of power and a system marred by animosity and strife. It now seems to be defining its place in the world as a community of peace and coexistence, reconciliation and cooperation. It is my hope that North-East Asia will achieve relations akin to those we see in Europe, for this will open an entirely new chapter in the history of North-East Asia, which in turn will contribute to global peace and prosperity.

How we reshape the United Nations today will be a harbinger of the global order of tomorrow. Accordingly, we should aspire to a community that exists to serve our common interest and respects the views of member nations.

For instance, reform of the Security Council, a body that is emblematic of the leadership of the United Nations, should proceed in a manner that enhances its moral authority through democracy, accountability and efficiency. Let me stress that any reform plan we arrive at should serve to facilitate harmony among nations, rather than presage another variant of great-Power politics. The enactment of such reform should assist the United Nations in overcoming the multiplicity of challenges besetting humankind, thus spearheading the realization of "larger freedom".

As a nation that has been fully committed to living up to the values championed by the United Nations, the Republic of Korea is prepared to do its part in contributing to peace and prosperity throughout the world. Korea is a nation that rose from the ashes of war to build the world's eleventh largest economy and to achieve significant democratic progress. It is an achievement that came about with the support of the international community. Consequently, it is only right that we should reciprocate by sharing this experience with fellow nations. We will work to undertake the full range of our responsibilities and roles, from tackling poverty and hunger to promoting human rights and bridging the digital divide.

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation leaders' meeting, scheduled for this November in Busan, Korea, should offer a timely opportunity for us to showcase our commitment and capacity in this regard.

The Co-Chairman (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Vicente Fox, President of Mexico.

President Fox (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of Mexico, a nation of peace, democracy and freedom, and an advocate of international law and cooperation, I wish today to convey a message of optimism and confidence in the potential and future of multilateralism.

We created this Organization of States 60 years ago. We have had achievements, but we have also had setbacks. We have managed to prevent a nuclear conflagration, which would have been the last war in the history of humankind, but we were unable to prevent the many other wars in which millions of persons perished.

We Members of this Organization share the commitments, principles and values on which this common house was founded. Our Organization has a very clear concept of development as a shared responsibility, which was incorporated in the Monterrey Consensus.

Our approach to security is multidimensional and maintains that security will not be possible for all unless we ensure socio-economic development and respect for human rights. This is the only way in which people can attain a "larger freedom", as Secretary-General Kofi Annan has proposed.

We welcome the decision to establish a Peacebuilding Commission, an initiative that will enable us to face post-conflict situations and to address the reconstruction processes. The draft outcome document to be adopted by this Assembly on Friday already contains many of the elements that will pave the way towards the comprehensive reform of our Organization.

We have made progress. But there are still pending issues that are fundamental, such as disarmament, and non-proliferation, both horizontal and vertical, of nuclear weapons and of weapons of mass destruction. We wish to establish the best possible system of collective security and therefore we support a democratic reform of the Security Council that will ensure greater representativity, transparency and true accountability, in the interest of the efficiency of the Council's work.

We must make progress in setting up the Human Rights Council as a standing body to address all situations of human rights violations and guarantee a system of evaluation of the performance of its members. We have been unable to agree upon a definition of terrorism that in turn would have provided us with a treaty, which we still lack. The agreements that have been reached and the tasks that we still face call for a clear timetable and also for specific commitments. This will be the only way in which we can transform our Organization into an increasingly efficient instrument in the service of peace and development. That is the demand of our people, and we must respond to it.

Mexico believes in the present and in the future of the United Nations, and that is why we support the work carried out by the Group of Friends of United Nations Reform. This Group in itself constitutes a microcosm of the Organization, and it has harnessed the political will and leadership of its members in order to put forward viable recommendations, including on those issues where general consensus appears difficult to achieve. Therefore, I wish to repeat my invitation to all members to continue with renewed vigour to work towards bringing about a true reform of the United Nations. I wish to thank my friends, the heads of State or Government who are members of the Group, for their work and dedication.

I commend The Co-Chairpersons for the work carried out under their leadership, and I express the hope that the present reforms will be implemented. The future of the United Nations demands a renewed commitment to the principles and values that inspired its creation. We must ensure that our Organization remains the best possible way of ensuring international peace, security and development, and that will require our shared commitment. It requires unity amongst diversity, which has been, is and will continue to be, our greatest strength.

Here and now, together, we can achieve this.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Traian Basescu, President of Romania.

President Basescu: I am honoured to represent Romania at this largest ever gathering of world leaders. We came because we believe in the United Nations. We came because we believe that it is entirely possible to reshape this Organization to serve better the needs and wishes of our peoples.

Romania has now been a Member of the United Nations for half a century. The United Nations has changed a lot in the meantime, and so has Romania. We are now part of an alliance of our choice — NATO — and are bound to join formally the European Union (EU). Equally important from here onward is how we will be able to reach out to other nations that have not benefited from similarly favourable circumstances, share with them how we did it, and be of assistance to them.

We will act on development in accordance with EU policy, trying to make a difference from the standpoint of a country with projects all over the world. The United Nations should expect more from this new Romania over the years to come, as it endeavours to integrate into its work the Eastern Europeans' unique experience of transition.

Following up on our commitment at the Millennium Summit, in 2004, in close cooperation with the United Nations agencies in Romania, we launched the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) report.

Romania is committed to achieving the set of Millennium Development Goals and targets as it advances on the road of European integration.

Security and regional cooperation are paramount components of any assessment we may be making of United Nations performance and achievement. Here Romania speaks out of experience gained during its current term in the Security Council.

Just three days ago we commemorated the victims of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States. Before, during and after that date virtually all regions sustained their own terror-generated attacks; from London to Sharm-el-Sheikh, from Moscow to Bali, no one seems to have been spared. Sadly, that is also true of the United Nations itself. It is clear that without an enduring "safety net" there are no "safe havens". I am proud that Romania was able, together with the 14 colleagues in the Security Council, to spearhead, as Chairman of 1540 Committee, global efforts against the worst-case security scenario, that of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) or related materials and technology falling into terrorists' hands.

Romania has, for some time now, taken the view that protection against security threats no longer means just making a stand at one's own border; we have to go where these challenges originate and take them up with resolute action and sustained investments. This is part of the rationale for Romania's joint endeavours with partners and allies in supporting stabilization and reconstruction in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In both Iraq and Afghanistan, elections are coming about as a result of tremendous dedication and efforts of their people, first of all, and also as the result of a steadily engaged international community. All efforts made so far in the stabilization and consolidation of freedom in post-Saddam Iraq should be seen in the longer perspective of the Middle East development. We see the new constitution as the cornerstone of a rising Iraq.

As a country belonging both to South-Eastern Europe and the Black Sea Region, Romania seeks to promote opportunities offered by the new cooperative approaches to security. That is why we feel confident that it will be possible for the Security Council to take a step forward in acknowledging the enduring relevance and the potential of Chapter VIII of the Charter when it takes up once again the theme of global and regional cooperation in the stabilization process under the Romanian presidency in October 2005.

Our ultimate aim should be to see the day when the international community is able to deal with each and every security challenge anywhere and any time by better pooling existing resources and capabilities for responding to violence.

There is a strong connection among security, development and respect for human rights, democratic values and good governance in everything that we are now attempting with a view to reforming the Organization. This essential linkage is more clearly reflected in the notion of a Peacebuilding Commission. Romania unreservedly supports the establishment of such a body.

Six decades after the United Nations was created, basic human rights and liberties are still infringed around the world. In Romania's own neighbourhood, there still are separatist areas of non-law, such as Transdniestria, where people are not protected by law or principle.

Often, the most affected are children, women and persons belonging to minorities. The United Nations should not hesitate to activate available mechanisms suited to addressing such threats and to take appropriate measures.

To conclude, Romania believes that this summit represents a huge political investment of trust and hope on behalf of our peoples. On this agreed transition to reform, Romania is ready to embark.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency the Right Honourable Tony Blair, MP, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Mr. Blair (United Kingdom): The United Nations must come of age. It must become the visible and credible expression of the globalization of politics. The modern world insists that we be dependent on each other: we work with each other or we suffer in isolation.

The principles of the United Nations have always had a moral force. Today, they receive the sharper impulse of self-interest. The terrorist attacks in Britain on 7 July 2005 have their origins in an ideology born thousands of miles from our shores. The proliferation

of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons will never be halted outside of an international consensus to do so.

Failed States, as we know to our cost, fail us all. For the protection of the environment, the promotion of international trade, we can do nothing without effective action together.

When we look with revulsion, as we should, at the misery of the millions who die in Africa and elsewhere through preventable famine, disease and conflict, the urgency to act is driven not just by conscience but by an inner sense that one day, if we refuse to act, we will reap a dire reward for our refusal. What is more, humanity today is confident of the values it shares. Give people the chance and they will always vote for freedom, always prefer tolerance to prejudice, never willingly accept the suppression of human rights and governance by extremism.

So the challenge is clear. The values are clear. The self-interest in upholding them together is also clear.

What must now be clear is that the United Nations can be the instrument of achieving the global will of the people. It must give leadership on terrorism. There is not and never can be any justification, any excuse, any cause that accepts the random slaughter of the innocent. Wherever it happens, whoever is responsible, we stand united in condemnation.

The United Nations must strengthen its policy on non-proliferation, in particular on how to allow nations to develop civil nuclear power, but not nuclear weapons.

The new Human Rights Council must earn the world's respect and not its contempt. The Peacebuilding Commission must become the means of renewing nations, where war and the collapse of proper systems of government have left them ravaged and their people desolate.

For the first time, at this summit, we are agreed that States do not have the right to do what they will within their own borders, but that we, in the name of humanity, have a common duty to protect people where their own Governments will not.

And finally, stalking this summit like a spectre are the Millennium Development Goals. The struggle against global poverty will define our moral standing in the eyes of the future. The Group of Eight, meeting in Scotland, showed how we redeem our pledge.

I have heard people describe the outcomes of this United Nations summit as modest. And no summit requiring unanimity from 191 nations can be more than modest. But if we did what we have agreed — on doubling aid, on opening up trade, on debt relief, on HIV/AIDS and malaria, on conflict prevention so that never again would the world stand by helpless when genocide struck — if we fulfilled our undertakings at this summit, our modesty would surprise. There would be more democracy, less oppression; more freedom, less terrorism; more growth, less poverty. The effects would be measured in the lives of millions of people who will never hear these speeches or read our statements. But it would, I suggest, be the proper vocation of political leadership, and the United Nations would live up to its name.

So we should do it.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Jan Peter Balkenende, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Mr. Balkenende (Netherlands): We are capable of sending spaceships to faraway planets in search of life. But are we sufficiently smart and determined to save the lives of innocent children on our own planet?

We live in a world where HIV/AIDS undermines entire societies. We have the knowledge and the resources to do something about it. But do we also have the political will?

We live in a world where the prospect of devastating climate change confronts us all. The recent floods in the heartland of Europe, in China and, of course, in this very country, might be seen as clear warnings. One third of my country, the Netherlands, lies below sea level. We can raise our dykes. But is it not high time for us to work together on a real solution?

We live in an age when our shared values, such as freedom, justice and respect for all, are under attack by terrorists. Will we be able to overcome the boundaries that divide us in the fight against violence and terror?

Poverty, disease, pollution, terrorism and violence have a worldwide impact; and they are all interconnected. Let us not make the mistake of

thinking that if threats are far away they are not our business. Such threats can set off a global chain reaction that will affect us all. All of us are equally vulnerable. Only if we are united can we transform our world for the better. Together, we are responsible for taking action.

In 2000, we promised the world that we would achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Now the time has come to fulfil that promise.

As political leaders we must have the courage to choose a model for international partnership that does justice to the tasks confronting us. We need an effective, multilateral system with clear commitments and rules, and strong institutions. That alone will give us the chance to make the world more secure, just and humane.

Rather than pretending that the United Nations is some entity distinct from us Member States, we should acknowledge that the Organization is "us" and that together we determine whether or not it is an effective tool. If we do not want the United Nations to be a lame duck, we must dare to give it the wings to fly.

Multilateralism works. Whenever we join forces, we help people to live their lives in dignity, freedom and peace. I applaud the efforts made so far in the run-up to this summit. In many respects, the outcome document presented to us today presents much needed progress. In other areas, however, we clearly must be more ambitious.

We welcome the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission to deal with conflicts in a more structural way. Also, I applaud our readiness to address deficiencies in the management of this Organization. We are equally pleased with the reaffirmed ambitions on development cooperation.

We welcome the recognition in the document of the important contribution of the private sector and civil society to our common objectives. Public-private partnerships are an effective and indispensable tool in combating poverty. Let us put these lofty principles into practice. We can do it. Together with the private sector, for example, the Netherlands and Ghana will take up an idea of the Hunger Task Force to support a school feeding programme that will increase school enrolment, reduce hunger and strengthen the local economy. Examples such as this one show that it is possible to bring the MDGs within reach.

Nevertheless, we can and should do more to enhance our capacity to deal with human rights violations. The Human Rights Council should be up and running by early 2006. We need to take the appropriate steps to make the Council a truly effective tool to promote and protect human rights.

Equally pressing is the need to enhance the credibility of the multilateral mechanisms in the field of non-proliferation. The document's deafening silence on this issue undermines the credibility of the United Nations.

No country in the world — no matter how powerful — can achieve these results alone. We must do it together. The key question is: are we able to combat poverty, disease, environmental degradation, terrorism and violence?

The answer is: yes, we are. So now, let us act. It is time to deliver, for the sake of our children and grandchildren.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Owen Seymour Arthur, Member of Parliament, Prime Minister and Minister for Finance and Economic Affairs of Barbados.

Mr. Arthur (Barbados): Today we gather, as a family of nations, to take stock of the progress that has been made in fulfilling the commitment that was given as part of our celebration of the start of a new century, to bring about a dramatic improvement in the human condition everywhere.

It is important that this meeting does not become just a theatre of the absurd, an occasion for expressing anger at what has not been achieved and for giving new commitments that we know we will not honour. It is time that we began to hold some common ground and use it as a beachhead from which to launch our drive for progress.

Almost exactly one year ago, Hurricane Ivan devastated Grenadian society. Today the United States of America is coming to terms with the enormity of the destruction inflicted on its southern states by Hurricane Katrina.

It is therefore highly significant that in a world where we talk about developed and developing, the undiscriminating forces of nature render us all equal and point to our common fragility and humanity.

These recent events have thereby highlighted our interdependence, reinforced the need for sustained and effective international cooperation and have placed before us, forcibly, the need to carry out a programme for global development to stop poor people from being poor, no matter where they live.

They also highlight the unnecessary and unsavoury dilemma that we have imposed on ourselves, because with today's technology, financial resources and accumulated knowledge, humanity has the capacity to overcome extreme deprivation. Yet, the international community allows poverty to destroy lives on a scale before which the impact of all of the world's natural disasters pales into insignificance.

It is unconscionable that we should have to continue to live in a world that consists of a permanent coalition of "unequals" — the fabulously rich and the desperately poor. It is especially unacceptable that the principal agents of international cooperation — trade and aid — should be used as instruments to perpetuate underdevelopment. The world can do better. The issues at the core of global development have nothing to do with means; they have to do with morality. We feel that this occasion should be one not only for recommitment to the goals set out in the Millennium Declaration, as narrowly defined, but also for a new commitment to a process of compassionate global development that draws upon the best values known to humanity.

Five years ago, Barbados wholeheartedly adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which gave expression to the substance of the Millennium Declaration. We accepted those goals not as new international tests to be passed, but as an inspiration to reach for higher social and economic heights.

We therefore propose not just to meet the Goals, but to exceed them. To that end, we have woven them into our national strategic plan for the next 20 years. We, however, entertain no illusions about the difficulty we will experience in meeting these Goals.

Though small, our nation has attained a human development index that puts us ahead of countries in the European Union. The price we have had to pay for this is to have access to aid and development finance denied to us at an early stage in our development. We are therefore largely on our own as the financier of our development programmes. At the same time, we can no longer plan our national development on the expectations of enjoying preferential access to the markets of the world.

This double-edged challenge posed by the reduction in our access to financial resources and the demands of trade liberalization has drastically transformed the environment within which our national development takes place. It, however, does not deter us from believing that we can attain full development; rather it causes us to look to new means and devices by which that full development can be attained.

Similarly, we believe that the state of the global society requires us to look to new means by which global economic and social progress can be attained.

In that regard, permit me to suggest that the MDGs will only be achieved if the eighth Millennium Goal of a global partnership for development is fully addressed. Barbados believes that it is vitally important for this High-level Plenary Meeting to be used by heads of State or Government to reaffirm commitment to the global partnership for development in the Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. This calls for increased and more predictable resources; a comprehensive, sustainable and development-oriented solution to the debt problem; the promotion of a universal, open and fair multilateral trading system and a global governance system that not only allows for the full and effective participation of developing countries in international economic decision-making, but also manages world economies in a manner that would distribute more equitably the world's resources. Anything less will find us wanting by 2015.

The Barbados economy is now largely a coastal economy. Like many other small island developing States, Barbados faces a high degree of vulnerability occasioned by climate change, climate variability and other phenomena such as the increased frequency and intensity of natural disasters.

The Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action clearly identifies the key areas that need to be addressed to help such small island developing States respond to these and other sustainable development challenges. The compassionate development of which I spoke earlier requires that our development partners assist small island developing States in getting easier and more effective access to the financial resources and

appropriate technologies needed as well as assistance in developing human and institutional capacity.

The Government and the people of Barbados have a vision to transform Barbados into a fully developed country; a model democracy that is prosperous, productive, peaceful, socially just and inclusive; a centre for high-quality services whose standards of excellence are global but at the same time rooted in our best traditions. We have made substantial progress in each of these spheres. Throughout this endeavour we will count on the solidarity of like-minded alliances, and we have the fullest hope in the shared responsibility of multilateralism, of which this Organization, the United Nations, must be the core.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Bertie Ahern, TD, Prime Minister of Ireland.

Mr. Ahern (Ireland): Ireland's support for the United Nations is unwavering. We have always placed the United Nations at the very centre of our foreign policy. Many Irish soldiers have served under the blue flag, and many have sacrificed their lives in that noble service.

The United Nations is, and will remain, fundamental to the pursuit of global justice, prosperity and security. Yet all of us here know that the United Nations must change. Of course, its failures are mainly the result of our failures. Too often in recent years, we have not mustered the will and resources — the courage — to match the determination of the founders of the United Nations to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

The many successes of the United Nations make our failures — failures which have at times been catastrophic — all the more inexcusable. That is why what we have agreed is so important. It does not achieve all that Ireland and many others would have hoped for. I regret that the Secretary-General's ambitious vision has not yet been fully realized. But significant progress has been achieved in several areas, and we have established a demanding agenda for the future.

Reform must continue, and change must happen. The realities of our world demand it.

Globalization has brought enormous benefits. More people have been lifted out of extreme poverty in the past decade than at any time since the United Nations was founded. But globalization also has its dark side. We see the spread of deadly infectious diseases. We see terrorists and organized criminals exploiting a more open world. And along with economic growth have come environmental degradation and climate change.

And globalization has left over 2 billion people behind: people who bear the brunt of conflict, of disease, of grinding poverty.

The links among development, security and human rights are clear and inescapable. It is no coincidence that many of the countries furthest from reaching the Millennium Development Goals are those most affected by conflict and by the abuse of human rights.

We live in a world where the clear distinction between conflict among States and conflict within States has become blurred. Recently, threats to peace have arisen mainly from internal strife, and those threats, as we have seen to our cost, do not stop at national borders.

We are all sovereign States, with sovereign rights and responsibilities. But where those responsibilities are not exercised to protect citizens from gross abuses or genocide, others must assume them through the United Nations, including, if all else fails, by military force. We have rightly committed ourselves never to allow events such as those that took place in Rwanda and Srebrenica to happen again.

Where countries have, with our help, taken the first steps out of conflict, we cannot leave them on their own. I welcome therefore the agreement to establish a Peacebuilding Commission and to have it up and running by the end of this year.

We must intensify our common efforts to deal with terrorism and move quickly to conclude a comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

The Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is of special importance to Ireland as its first signatory. The Treaty's twin goals of disarmament and non-proliferation reinforce each other. I deeply regret the failure to make any progress on this occasion. However, Ireland will continue working to strengthen the Treaty.

Let us quickly make a reality of the new Human Rights Council. We will work to make it fully effective in the promotion and protection of human rights.

The United Nations must become more efficient. Its Secretariat, agencies and staff must be fully accountable. The Secretary-General has to have the authority and flexibility to manage the Organization and to devote resources to where they are most needed. It is not fair to deny him this and then to blame him when things go wrong.

It is an affront to our common humanity, five years after the Millennium Summit, that 30,000 children die each day from easily preventable diseases, or that 100 million people go to bed hungry, or that 100 million children are not receiving a basic education.

Ireland is not a silent witness to this continuing tragedy. Over the past five years, my Government has more than doubled Ireland's official development assistance (ODA) — from €254 million to €545 million. Indeed, since coming into office my Government has tripled ODA.

Today I commit Ireland to reaching the United Nations target of 0.7 per cent. This will be achieved by 2012, three years earlier than the agreed European Union target date of 2015. Given current economic projections, this will mean a tripling of Ireland's ODA above current levels. Our commitment is demanding but achievable. And it will be achieved.

As the first milestone on the way to reaching the United Nations target, I commit the Government to significantly increasing our official development assistance in the next two years in order to reach an interim target of 0.5 per cent of our GNP in 2007. This means that we will spend €658 million next year and €773 million on official development assistance in 2007.

Quantity is important, but so also is quality. Ireland is one of the very few donors all of whose aid is untied. Our aid will remain untied. Our aid is effective aid.

The new money will support new activities.

First, next year, Ireland will double its spending on the fight against HIV/AIDS to €100 million. This builds on the commitment I gave here in 2001 to put the battle against HIV/AIDS at the very centre of our programme.

Secondly, the new resources will allow Ireland to respond more quickly and effectively to major humanitarian emergencies. We will work in partnership with the United Nations and non-governmental organizations to bring relief to victims and to tackle the root causes of hunger.

Thirdly, we will support the United Nations in creating the new fund to promote democratic values throughout the world. People want to help but they want to be sure their money is being properly used. To ensure that public support for aid remains strong, we must work with developing countries to improve governance, promote human rights, increase transparency and stamp out corruption.

And, finally, we know from our own experience that reducing poverty needs strong economic growth and a vibrant private sector. We will work together with Irish industry and partner companies in Africa to promote trade, investment and technology transfer.

By committing to the 0.7 per cent target, Ireland will spend up to €8 billion on helping to tackle poverty and alleviate poverty in some of the world's poorest countries. By any standards this is a huge commitment on behalf of the Irish people, but I know that they, and especially the young people, will welcome it.

Gathered here, we have pledged to take action to make the world more secure and more just. Now we must follow through. We have taken a step forward, but there is a long road still to travel.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency The Honourable Winston Baldwin Spencer, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Antigua and Barbuda.

Mr. Spencer (Antigua and Barbuda): Exactly four years ago this past Sunday the 9/11 terrorist attack on America united the world in horror and in compassion. Today this sixtieth session of the General Assembly is taking place in a nation again traumatized. Our hearts go out to those unfortunate Americans and citizens of other countries who lost everything, including loved ones, in the devastation that Hurricane Katrina has wrought.

Fortunately for Katrina's surviving victims, a silver lining has broken through the dark clouds of the Gulf Coast disaster. Sadly, the underprivileged in poor countries have no hope for any silver lining to brighten

their permanently bleak existence. Adversity is the dominant feature of their existence and their expectations.

There could be a silver lining for that global underclass. This would happen if the riveting television images of the ongoing agony of Katrina's victims could ignite among all nations and among all peoples the recognition that we all share the duty to be our brothers' keepers.

It would be to the immeasurable good of humankind if members of this family of nations assembled for this High-level Plenary Meeting could embrace this shared responsibility. It should also underline the imperative for comprehensive United Nations reform that would make this Organization more responsive — and more timely in its response — to the vulnerabilities of, and pervasive threats to the poor in its smaller, developing Member States.

Should we fail to respond in this fashion, we would condemn ourselves to history's verdict that when called upon we would all be guilty of failing humanity. That is a charge that we must not permit history to levy against us.

Antigua and Barbuda is a small, twin-island nation of approximately 85,000 people. An estimated thirty-five percent of our population is immigrant, the vast majority of non-natives being from sister Caribbean countries to whom we opened our borders when they faced economic distress and natural disasters.

In consequence of this, social and economic development is increasingly challenging for a developing nation shouldering a debt burden out of all proportion to our economic capacities.

We recognize, nonetheless, that we live in a global and interdependent world, in which no State can stand alone. The current crippling impact of continually rising energy costs on our fragile economies is a current case in point. Venezuela's offer of stable fuel supplies on concessionary terms through the PetroCaribe Initiative is therefore a timely and welcome intervention for member countries of the Caribbean Community.

These and other issues highlight the need for the expansion of the partnership between developed and developing countries.

Meeting the agreed official development assistance target of 0.7 per cent of GNP, including within the context of the Mauritius Strategy, must be addressed if small States are to devise strategic infrastructural mechanisms for sustainable development and competitiveness.

Antigua and Barbuda, like other members of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, has limited options for trade in a globalized world. We lack the factors required for a viable manufacturing base. Our principal economic options are tourism and financial services, and in the case of Antigua and Barbuda, Internet gaming.

It is thus not difficult to grasp Antigua and Barbuda's compelling need to seek World Trade Organization intervention in the dispute with the United States of America regarding Internet gaming. Internet gaming is one of the limited available options through which Antigua and Barbuda, as a small developing State, can bridge the digital divide and use information and communications technology as an instrument of economic development.

Rendering Antigua and Barbuda poorer by unlawfully denying market access to Internet gaming will not make the United States richer. Forgiving the disproportionate debt that continues to cripple developing economies will not make creditor countries poor. Deporting hardened convicted felons to vulnerable Caribbean societies will not make America or any OECD country safer. Enabling developing nations to access vitally needed pharmaceuticals at rates reasonably close to the cost of production will not put transnational drug companies out of business.

Last October, just seven months after our election to our first term of office, the Government of Antigua and Barbuda enacted an unprecedented trilogy of integrity legislation, comprising an Integrity in Public Life Act, a Prevention of Corruption Act and a Freedom of Information Act. We are convinced that transparency, accountability and integrity in government are fundamental to economic and social development.

Without prompt solutions to the debt obligations of small and vulnerable economies, the targeted eradication of poverty will remain an elusive Millennium Development Goal. A reformed United Nations system must, therefore, devise special

mechanisms to reduce the debt burdens of low and middle-income countries.

An area of immediate potential for small States would be assistance from the international community in capacity-building in information and communications technology.

As small-island developing countries of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, Antigua and Barbuda and our immediate neighbouring islands face the challenges of very limited land space, fragile ecosystems, and vulnerability to natural disasters and the effects of climate change.

Compounding these challenges is our heavy dependence on the natural environment to support our tourism industry, the lifeblood of the economies of our nations.

Threats to our natural environment are therefore threats to our very existence. We contribute the least to the causes of climate change, yet we suffer the most from its effects.

The devastation wrought by the increased intensity of hurricanes can set back our development efforts by decades, and has indeed done so.

As we continue to invest in development of our human capital, HIV/AIDS continues to eat away at those investments. We need the cooperation of our international partners to gain access to health-care resources.

A reformed United Nations system must be empowered with the necessary financial and technical resources to assist its Member States in the fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS, the distribution of anti-retroviral drugs and the necessary resources for prevention programmes.

The United Nations plays a crucial role in international peace and security. Its reform is unavoidable in order to meet today's global challenges.

Antigua and Barbuda fully believes that in order to respond to global threats and challenges, United Nations reform must be multifaceted. It must be achieved through a process of democratic deliberations designed to achieve a consensus.

Reforms must take into consideration the goals of developing countries, which make up two thirds of its membership.

It is my country's hope that the 60th session of the General Assembly will achieve reform through unity and in the long-term interest of the membership of the United Nations.

I trust that these reflections will remind all nations in whose names this High-level Plenary Meeting was convened that among these United Nations the obligation falls to the bigger brother States to be their smaller brothers' keepers.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Prime Minister of Malaysia.

Mr. Badawi: Sixty years ago, the founders of the United Nations pledged in writing that this Organization should save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, reaffirm the dignity of the human person, uphold international law and promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

Indeed, much has been achieved but much, but much more remains to be done. Why are we continuing to witness many wars in our times? Why do we continue to see human rights trampled with impunity? Why do States continue to commit serious breaches of international law? Why are hundreds of millions of people still living in poverty and indignity?

Yet our best hopes still lie with this Organization. Let us therefore write another solemn pledge on this occasion, to put forth bones' efforts and to take the necessary steps to reform the United Nations so that it can truly serve the purposes for which it was intended.

Malaysia holds the view that the most fundamental objective to be achieved in any reform and renewal of the United Nations system must be the protection and enhancement of multilateralism.

I am aware of the growing consensus towards accepting that the existing provisions of the United Nations Charter regarding the use of force are sufficient to address the full range of security threats; that the only issue remaining is how to ensure that the use of force is applied only as an instrument of last resort.

However, any intervention must give due recognition to Charter principles pertaining to sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference.

While the Security Council would appropriately be the body to take decisions on these matters, it is Malaysia's view that provision must also be made for the General Assembly to have an oversight role in this critical matter of the use of force to deal with threats to international security.

Malaysia is convinced that an effective multilateral system, centred upon an appropriately empowered General Assembly, is our best guarantee against the exercise of absolute power or disregard for international law.

We note that here is also a growing consensus to accept the justifiability of the use of force to protect civilian populations from crimes against humanity, such as genocide and ethnic cleansing. I should like to say that it is equally a crime against humanity to allow poverty and deprivation to persist in these modern times. How can we continue to stand by while eight million people around the world die each year because they are too poor to stay alive?

There are over one billion people — that is, one in every six people around the world — who live in extreme poverty, subsisting on less than one dollar per day.

Poverty has deprived more than 100 million children of the opportunity of going to primary school.

In this connection, a high premium must be placed on providing educational opportunities and on the capability of people to have access to education. Education and the power of knowledge are the greatest equalizer among individuals in a society and the greatest leveller that can bridge the prosperity gap among the nation States in this globalized world.

The United Nations is best placed to play the lead role in embarking upon a capacity-building programme specifically earmarked to eradicate poverty. We should never renege on our commitments to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

I come now to my final point, which is why we need effective multilateralism in order to fight terrorism successfully in all its forms and manifestations.

First and foremost, terrorism must be condemned. However, the global scope of the fight against terrorism requires the widest possible collaboration among all countries. It is only the United Nations that can galvanize such a huge undertaking.

We must know the motives of terrorists in order to identify the root causes of their actions. These could be political injustice, the denial of human rights, a brutish life entrenched in pervasive poverty or something else yet to be uncovered.

We must take action to address the root causes so as to render their motivations irrelevant. It is possible to disrupt, capture or kill individual terrorists. However, unless the root causes are addressed and removed, new recruits will take the place of leaders and groups killed or destroyed in the fight against terrorism. Terrorists deserve neither compassion nor sympathy. But we do need to know their minds and their mentality.

We must also maintain a distinction between acts of terrorism and the right of peoples fighting for self-determination. It is equally unjustifiable to associate terrorism with any particular race or religion. Terrorists must be singled out only by their acts of terror and nothing else.

Let me briefly refer to the Outcome Document before us, which we all know is a text that has finally emerged after many stages of painstaking negotiations. Undoubtedly, the language and content of the document reflect many degrees of compromises. This means that no one is fully satisfied.

Certainly, many issues remain unresolved. Quite clearly, therefore, we have much unfinished business on our hands in the months and years to come.

We have really no choice but to make the United Nations relevant for now and for the future. The causes of future conflicts may come from a complex mix of political, economic and strategic reasons. The quests for prosperity and security may very well intersect. We must reform the United Nations to make it competent to address the interrelated and cross-cutting issues, and succeed in preventing future conflicts. In settling conflicts, we want to use the United Nations, but a United Nations that is abused is of no use.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Gerard Latortue, Prime Minister of the Republic of Haiti.

Mr. Latortue (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): It is a pleasure for me to take the floor at this summit and to share with you the concerns and the wishes of the Haitian people on the issues being debated in this Hall. I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Secretary-General and his team for this excellent initiative, without which the Millennium Development Goals might well have remained no more than pious hopes.

On behalf of the people of Haiti, I should like to thank the brother countries of Latin America, Europe, the Middle East, Asia and Africa, who have dispatched troops as part of the United Nations military and police contingents that are successfully contributing to restoring peace, stability and security in my country. These are essential prerequisites for holding the free and democratic elections that are planned for the end of this year.

I wish above all this evening to dwell on the reform of the structures of this universal Organization and the essential review of the mechanisms for formulating and evaluating cooperation projects, and also for coordinating international development assistance.

Let us begin with the Security Council. Haiti continues to support the enlargement of this organ through the admission of new permanent members to ensure a more just and more balanced representation more in line with the realities of today's world. The President of Senegal said earlier that if we do not reach an agreement on a formula, then perhaps we should repair the historic injustice by giving a position to Africa. I support his position, but I should like to add that there has been a dual historic injustice in respect of Latin America and the Caribbean countries, which likewise are not represented in the Security Council with a permanent seat. I should also like to express my deep conviction that the selection criteria for the new members should not be just their economic, financial or military power. I believe that any country that observes the rules of good governance, respects human rights and ensures free elections should also be eligible for a permanent seat on the Security Council.

With regard to the General Assembly, I believe that it is important for it to play a much more important role as a decision-making body. We will not reach this goal by continuing to view the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly as a catalogue of good intentions. It is time for a greater balance to be established between the powers of the Security Council and those of the General Assembly.

What interests me most about this summit is that it is an opportunity to speak in a friendly way, but frankly and objectively, of the shortcomings of the United Nations system with regard to the machinery for providing, managing and coordinating development aid. A strengthened Economic and Social Council with a better structure and significantly enhanced resources should be able to contribute to a more effective system of international development assistance.

I should like to take an example, that of my own country, a founding Member of the United Nations and almost the first developing country to enjoy United Nations assistance. However, this assistance has left very little in the way of tangible results. The Rosenberg Mission was sent to Haiti from 1948-1950, and its mission report, entitled "Mission to Haiti," is still the authoritative reference document on the problem of development in my country. However, after more than fifty years of cooperation with the United Nations, there is still very little sign of all this assistance that we have received over the years. Our infrastructure is still in poor condition, our roads are crumbling, electricity is still a luxury out of reach for most of the population, more than half of Haitians are illiterate and there are many other problems, even worse than these. It is true that bad governance by the Haitian leaders is partially responsible for this state of affairs, but the international community must also call itself into question, engage in self-criticism and seek to develop a culture of efficiency.

And we must begin by putting an end to this sterile competition amongst United Nations agencies, and between them and other bilateral and multilateral organizations. We wish for a sweeping review of cooperation policies and of the distribution of official development assistance. We understand that donors have a political interest in planting their flag on each project that they finance. But when they do so to the detriment of the goals pursued and at the cost of positive results for beneficiaries' daily lives, the approach must be changed.

I would be remiss if I ended my statement without requesting a considerable reduction in the percentage of international assistance that goes to the remuneration of international experts. This is possible

of we make greater use of the qualified, experienced human resources available nationally, which are available both inside and outside the beneficiary countries.

And finally, I should like to make a heartfelt appeal for greater coordination between the United Nations agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions. Whatever one may say, the latter organizations do not seem to have a conception of development that can really help our countries to achieve lift-off. This coordination is essential to ensure greater effectiveness of international cooperation, particularly with regard to financing for development.

And in talking about financing for development, I should like to take the opportunity to welcome the excellent initiative of Presidents Chirac and Lula da Silva, who have proposed innovative machinery for financing international development assistance. We support those proposals and we call upon all those who can do so to support them in a concrete way and to make them operational as soon as possible.

In conclusion, let me express the hope that the ideas being discussed today will not end up as reports piling up in drawers along with the masses of other reports produced over the years in this prestigious institution, but, on the contrary, that they will give us food for thought and influence behaviour and public policy choices.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) *(spoke in French)*: The General Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Albert Pintat Santolaria, Prime Minister of the Principality of Andorra.

Mr. Pintat Santolaria (Andorra): Before I begin, I would like to express, on behalf of the people of the Principality of Andorra, our sympathy for and solidarity with those who have suffered following the recent hurricane on the American Gulf Coast.

(continued in Catalan; English text provided by the delegation)

This year is the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations. It is also the sixtieth anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In the aftershock of the cataclysm of the atomic bomb, a terrifying truth was revealed: that with every technological leap forward, greater and more terrible dangers arise. The world recognized the need for the United Nations, not only as a means of curbing the dangers of our modern world but also as a forum for reflection.

It is with the greatest respect and hope that I appear here today to address the United Nations. For in today's world, a telephone call or an Internet message can take us to the farthest reaches of the planet in a split second. All countries have become neighbours. Any war, wherever it may be taking place, affects us all directly, just the same as a natural disaster. We are witnessing the birth of a global sensibility, of an ethical sense of fair play, decency and solidarity that transcends national borders, languages and even religions. Like it or not, fear it or accept it, we are all gradually merging into a single entity. What type of entity will this be? Will we live in a world where human rights are universally recognized? Where a decent standard of living is enjoyed by all citizens? Where medical care is available to everyone who needs it? Where education is prized as the foundation of spiritual well-being? Or will we be rent by divisiveness, war, terror, misery, and ignorance?

Small States are in the majority amongst the Members of the United Nations, and this place gives us a forum in which our voices may be heard. I say may be heard, since it is true that globalized media increasingly control the dissemination of information. This makes the United Nations all the more valuable as a place in which original and courageous ideas can be proposed.

Many countries are united in rejecting isolationism. We know that our borders are very close to each other. We know and trust our neighbours. The interconnected nature of the global community comes as no surprise. Multilateralism is essential in a globalized world. And for this very reason we must all support institutions such as the International Criminal Court. In these uncertain times, as a new chapter in history dawns, we must all commit ourselves to international cooperation in an attempt to create a safer and more just world.

There is much talk about the reform of the United Nations. I embrace the concept of reform. Who can be against the improvement of such a vital institution as the United Nations at a time when the world so desperately requires its vision and its mission to preserve peace?

At the same time, I would like to draw attention to all those parts of the United Nations system that

have made such significant contributions over the past half century; for example, the United Nations Children's Fund, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Health Organization, which have all made our world a better place. It is remarkable that the United Nations has accomplished so much with so few resources. Of course, much remains to be done. We strongly support Kofi Annan in his proposed reforms. We believe, like him, that these reforms will enhance the credibility of the Organization and good governance within it, and will increase its transparency.

One of the great achievements of the United Nations was the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, and we must now support the creation of a council with powers to reinforce the implementation of human rights. Education must also become our priority. It is without a doubt one of the essential elements that are necessary to promote human rights and one of the most effective tools for the development of humankind.

Andorra also supports the gradual implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. These Goals were agreed on at a summit in 2000. At that summit, we committed ourselves to act, not simply to mouth empty words.

In this globalized and interconnected world, geographic barriers no longer protect us, nor can rich countries ignore the hardships suffered in the poorest countries. Not only must we recognize the principles of social equality, but words must be matched by deeds.

The abominable and unjustifiable acts of terrorism in New York, Madrid and London; the genocide in Rwanda; recent wars and conflicts — all these events have deeply troubled the international community. And yet there is still hope in this imperfect world.

In a famous meditation written over 400 years ago, the Englishman John Donne wrote, "No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. ... Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee."

Perhaps we can turn his remarks around and meditate on life, on the nature of the life that binds us all. Countering hunger, AIDS and terrorism, overcoming poverty, working for more egalitarian justice: these are the goals and dreams which unite us here in this Assembly. Achieving these goals is to live as a human being and ensure the certainty of a better tomorrow. Let us choose life together and continue the fight, united under the blue flag of hope of the United Nations.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will now hear an address by Her Excellency Begum Khaleda Zia, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Ms. Zia (Bangladesh): We gathered here five years ago to adopt the Millennium Declaration. We had faith in the document because it reflected the hopes and aspirations of our peoples and also the seriousness with which we wanted to address the issues that confronted us. Today, we have an opportunity to review the progress made and also chart the way forward to reach our common goals.

The Millennium Development Goals are a set of goals to ensure development, peace and security, and human rights for our peoples. We have set for ourselves a target to implement the Millennium Development Goals by the year 2015. I cannot agree more with the Secretary-General that it is within our means to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. We can halve global poverty and stem the spread of major diseases, promote gender equality and empower women in 10 years time.

Progress in achieving these Millennium Development Goals may have fallen short of expectations, but we are not totally disheartened.

We in Bangladesh have the satisfaction of achieving two Millennium Development Goals already, namely removing gender disparity in primary and secondary schools and ensuring access to safe drinking water. Despite numerous constraints, we have made substantive progress in six key socio-economic development areas.

First, in the last 10 years we have achieved a sustained growth rate of over 5 per cent of our gross domestic product (GDP). That was despite the floods and other natural disasters that so frequently visit our country.

Secondly, as living conditions have improved, the incidence of poverty has fallen substantially. Indeed, our record exceeded that of most developing countries.

The percentage of people living in poverty in Bangladesh fell from over 70 per cent. in 1971, to less than 45 per cent. in 2002.

Thirdly, food security has improved in the past few years. Having suffered from chronic food deficits in the 1970s, Bangladesh is now very close to achieving food self-sufficiency.

Fourthly, we have enhanced our capacity to better respond to, and manage, natural disasters. Despite last year's floods, and as a result of people's resilience and prudent and effective post-flood economic measures, our GDP growth rate was 5.5 per cent.

Fifthly, there has been gradual improvement in the physical quality-of-life index. That has been achieved through the Government's allocation of the highest amount of resources to the education and health sectors year after year.

Sixthly, we have had laudable successes in key social sectors. Bangladesh has one of the highest primary school enrolment rates in the developing world. Most importantly, we have achieved gender parity in enrolment at the primary and lower-secondary levels. The population growth rate has been drastically reduced, falling to 1.47 per cent in 2005 from 3 per cent in the 1970s. The total fertility rate has dropped by 50 per cent., from 6.3 to 3 births per woman over the last two decades. Infant mortality has decreased by over 60 per cent. since 1980. The empowerment of women has also gathered pace. Microcredit programmes have reached over 12 million people, most of whom are women.

We have finalized a poverty reduction strategy paper through wide-ranging consultations with all stakeholders. Our strategies include ensuring the participation of poor people and women in economic development; promoting good governance and sound allocation of resources; improving the quality of delivery of services — such as in the areas of employment, nutrition, education and health — to meet the basic needs of the people; and ensuring sustainable development and environmental balance. At the same time, we are making determined efforts to strengthen democratic institutions and ensure good governance and the rule of law. An anti-corruption commission has been established. The office of the tax ombudsman has been created. An independent human rights commission will soon be constituted. The separation of the judiciary from the executive branch is under way. All those initiatives are expected to have a positive impact on our overall socio-economic development.

The forces of intolerance, extremism and violence have to be tackled vigorously. Bangladesh's unequivocal condemnation of all forms of terrorism is well known. The root causes that lead to such wayward behaviour must also be addressed. The problems of poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy and environmental degradation continue to haunt us. If we do not address those problems effectively now, we will not be able to contain the tensions and violence around us or build a peaceful and just tomorrow.

This meeting should provide the necessary impetus to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. What we need today is firm political will to implement the plans we have already agreed upon. In particular, I appeal to developed countries to fulfil their commitment as clearly stated in goal 8 of the Millennium Development Goals. Let our meeting send a strong signal that we are willing and ready to translate action plans into reality. Let our gathering be remembered by posterity as the one that made a difference in people's lives.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency The Honourable Lawrence Gonzi, Prime Minister of the Republic of Malta.

Mr. Gonzi (Malta): This gathering of world leaders constitutes an impressive manifestation of our collective determination to work together in the promotion of a more peaceful, just and prosperous global order. On the one hand, this meeting is a reaffirmation of the trust that our peoples put into the United Nations process in the pursuit of that objective. At the same time, this meeting is an expression of concern at the immense and growing challenges we face in that regard. We all share the sense of both risk and opportunity that arise from the contrasts and uncertainties of the current global order.

Ours is a time characterized, as never before, by the parallel existence of unbounded wealth and unrelievable poverty, of major scientific breakthroughs and pervasive illiteracy, of overwhelming gestures of kindness and charity and of atrocious acts of wickedness and inhumanity. That mix of contrasts has the potential to seriously destabilize our societies and ways of living. At the same time, however, it contains within it the germ of remedial and healing action.

Each one of us brings to this gathering his or her society's unique experiences of how those contrasts are unfolding at the grass-roots level. Some have been the direct victims of acts of savagery and terrorism; others of catastrophic natural disasters. Many bring evidence of the ravages of poverty, malnutrition and ill-health; others of the dehumanizing impact of internal conflict and political upheaval.

Malta is today experiencing the influx of overwhelming and unregulated immigration flows, which is in itself a result of many of the other problems. In our case that experience is all the more unnerving in that it has struck our small society with unexpected suddenness and magnitude.

The catalytic ingredient to transform all those challenges from threats into opportunities lies in the readiness to take collective action across the board.

In presenting his initial proposals for our outcome document, last March, Secretary-General Kofi Annan aptly reminded that us that the cause of larger freedom can only be advanced if nations work together.

We have before us at this meeting a package of proposals which address the cause of larger freedom in all its dimensions — those relating to development, to security and to human rights. We also have before us a set of proposals aimed at improving the effectiveness and responsiveness of the United Nations as an institutional structure.

Together with our partners in the European Union, Malta has played an enthusiastic and constructive role in the preparation of the outcome document. On this occasion, I wish to underline my firm commitment and the commitment of the Government and people of Malta to the values and principles that we have been promoting throughout the process.

Many aspects of the outcome document we have before us reflect the sense of solidarity, the humanistic spirit and the attachment to the rule of law which need to underpin international relations.

I will not hide my feeling that we would have wished the document to have been even more ambitious than it already is. In particular, we would have wished to see a more forceful reference to the question of impunity, and especially to the important role that is being played by the International Criminal Court. We would also have wished to see more ambitious sections on environment, on human rights and on disarmament.

At the same time we realize that the consensus that has been achieved on a number of sensitive issues lays a good foundation for further measures of reform. There are, in fact, many encouraging examples of how we can achieve results, at times even against the odds. One of those was the recent conclusion of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, which I will have the pleasure and honour of signing on behalf of Malta tomorrow morning.

Enunciations of principles and adherence to values have a necessary counterpart in the collective responsibility to undertake concrete and action-oriented measures. Our outcome document has identified a number of such measures. Discussion of many of them will continue through the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. Among other things, we are defining long-term targets and objectives for development cooperation, we are laying the institutional foundations for two new organs within the United Nations — the peacebuilding commission and the human rights council — and we are breaking new ground in the areas of terrorism and of collective responsibility. I would therefore like to affirm today Malta's readiness to engage itself with vigour and determination in the implementation of those measures.

It is appropriate that this important exercise is being conducted at a time when the United Nations is commemorating the sixtieth anniversary since its creation. Throughout those 60 years, the United Nations — our United Nations — has served as a point of continuity and a beacon of hope. It provided continuity throughout the dark period of the cold war. It provided hope throughout the complex and transformative decolonization process.

Though much has changed in our world over the last 60 years, one thing has remained constant: mankind's yearning for peace, dignity and freedom. It is right that, on this occasion, we rededicate ourselves to the pursuit of that objective.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Driss Jettou, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Morocco.

Mr. Jettou (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like at the outset to offer my most sincere congratulations to the Co-Chairpersons of this unprecedented High-level Plenary Meeting on their election.

I also take this opportunity to express our thanks to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his generous and tireless efforts to uphold the noble objectives of the United Nations in response to the aspirations of the international community. The principles of equality among States, respect for their sovereignty, national unity and territorial integrity, and the settlement of disputes by peaceful means, in addition to the need to refrain from the use or threat of use of force and to uphold human rights and international law, still represent the cornerstones of any world order.

Morocco strongly believes that the prevention of conflicts and their settlement through peaceful means are the most efficient ways to preserve peace between States and peoples, whatever the nature of the disputes or differences between the parties to the conflict, in order to genuinely abide by and maintain the noble principles of coexistence. We have always demonstrated our sincere readiness to settle the artificial dispute over the Western Sahara with our neighbours in Algeria, and have demonstrated a strong desire to develop our bilateral relations in an atmosphere of solidarity, good-neighbourliness and fruitful cooperation, and within the framework of a strategic approach to placing the Arab Maghreb Union on strong and sound foundations. We sincerely hope to be able to end our current dispute once and for all, and are looking forward to working with our brothers and Maghreb partners to strengthen cooperation, stability and integrated development in our region.

For several decades now, our country has also contributed to international efforts to establish peace and security in regions of conflict and severe crisis, particularly in the Middle East. We are also participating in and contributing to the consolidation of peace and stability in countries threatened by fragmentation and balkanization. That is why we now have forces in the Congo and Haiti, and why we sent contingents to Somalia, Angola and Bosnia and Herzegovina in the past. The United Nations excellent record in peacekeeping operations is a clear demonstration that the consolidation of peace and security can guarantee economic growth particularly in developing and poor countries, and allows them to face the international crises that threaten humankind as a whole.

In that connection, we reaffirm Morocco's strong commitment to cooperating with regional and international parties in the fight against the heinous scourge of terrorism. We insist on the importance of the international community's engaging in such cooperation in order to address economic and social problems, overcome endemic and fatal diseases, and face the other problems that hinder the stability and development of developing countries, especially in Africa.

The Kingdom of Morocco is working to give the profound hope to vulnerable populations that international solidarity will move from the phase of promises to that of actual fulfilment. To give substance to those international commitments, and while chairing the Group of 77 and China in 2003, we strove to achieve the objectives we set ourselves, pursuant to Morocco's international commitments. We have also adopted a modern family code that ensures gender equality, guarantees children's rights, and protects family cohesion and unity. Moreover, we have adopted a national initiative for human development that is in line with the goals of the new millennium and is based on a comprehensive vision and on the principles of political democracy, economic efficiency, social cohesion and responsible citizenship — all factors that ensure the individual's integration into the process of development.

Morocco is also pursuing tireless action to boost South-South cooperation and promote tangible solidarity with our African brothers by opening our markets to exports from the least developed African countries, and to alleviate their debts to our country.

The sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations is an opportunity that we should seize so we can go forward in developing it soundly and with fairness, irrespective of the difficulties and obstacles. Indeed, the Organization is the most effective forum for dialogue and negotiation, for finding suitable solutions to complex issues, and for building a fair and multilateral international order.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Laurent Dona-Fologo, chairman of the delegation of Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Dona-Fologo (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): The President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, Mr. Laurent Gbagbo, has been unable to join us here today on this great gathering on the Millennium Development Goals and on the occasion of our commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the Organization, and he deeply regrets his absence. As Members know, our country, Côte d'Ivoire, is going through a difficult time, and certain urgent tasks have kept him at home.

He has therefore asked me, humbly and on his behalf, to convey the greetings of Côte d'Ivoire to the President of the General Assembly, the outgoing President, the Secretary-General and all participants here. He also sends his respects to all his colleagues, the heads of State and Government who have been able to attend.

Previous speakers have eloquently described all the Millennium Development Goals, the hopes invested in them, and their aspirations to achieve the desired results. Five years ago, Côte d'Ivoire, like all other countries, subscribed to those Goals and joins in welcoming all the efforts made to that end. At the same time, we call for greater solidarity and efficiency in addressing the pending issues. We welcome in particular the initiatives undertaken by the wealthy countries, the Group of Eight and the leaders of developed countries, including France through its President Chirac, the United Kingdom through Prime Minister Tony Blair, and the President of Brazil. All of those initiatives are encouraging and deserve our support and gratitude.

However, failures and disappointments linger, for example with regard to the World Trade Organization and trade, where the farmers of the South still lack a level playing field with those of the North. That is embodied in the issue of cotton, which remains contentious. We must have the courage to resolve such issues if we wish together to shape a better world.

Côte d'Ivoire is making its humble contribution to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, but we all know that, as the Ivorian adage says, one cannot ask a squatting frog for a chair. The frog squats because it has no chair to offer. Today, Côte d'Ivoire, which has been listed among the emerging countries of Africa, has been brought to its knees, but has not yet been felled. We hope that the international community, along with all the good will expressed here, will help us from going under. Our struggle with regard to HIV/AIDS, literacy, women and children — in a word, to the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals — cannot succeed without the prerequisites of peace nor security.

Our long and bitter experience of war comes through human error, stupidity and a mutual lack of understanding. We therefore call on the international community as a whole to help Côte d'Ivoire — as our brothers of the Economic Community of West African States; the African Union, through its mediator Thabo Mbeki, whom we commend; and the Secretary-General of the United Nations have done — to prevent the worst from occurring. We can no longer afford to falter between democracy, embodied in a legally established Government, and those who take up arms in order to seize power.

I believe that the United Nations and the international community encourage and protect democracy, and that Côte d'Ivoire cannot be an exception to that activity. The international community must come to our aid, as it is doing with the deployment of some 10,000 French and United Nations troops on our territory, in order to avert the worst-case scenario. It is urgent that we cease wavering between the rebel forces and the legal authority. I hope that everyone will come to understand that and that, above all, the international community, with all the means at its disposal, will stop Côte d'Ivoire from going under.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker for this meeting.

The meeting rose at 8.45 p.m.